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IN OUR CITIES**

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# **STUDIES OF BOY LIFE IN OUR CITIES,**

**WRITTEN BY VARIOUS AUTHORS  
FOR THE TOYNBEE TRUST**



**EDITED BY  
E. J. URWICK, M.A.**

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## INTRODUCTION

THE essays which this book contains are studies, from different points of view, of the life of the London working boy. The subject is a wide one, for it embraces a multitude of types which in later life are distinguished by the clearly marked differences between the city clerk, the skilled artisan, the factory hand, the unskilled day labourer, the casual man of odd jobs, the loafer who does nothing, and the rogue who does worse than nothing. But in their boyhood these differences are less obvious. The apprentice, who will in a few years earn his £2 a week, lives in the same street as the ran-boy, who will never rise above a carman's wages, fraternises with him in the same club, belongs to the same street clique. His home life may be better, his chances for the future are certainly brighter, the influences which are moulding him in his working hours are probably more steady and more educative, but his nature, like his early schooling, differs little from that of every other boy in his circle, whatever their future occupation may be. So far, then, the writers of these essays deal with the working boys of all grades; but their interest is centred most of all in the labouring boy proper, who from early youth has to make his living

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solely by physical strength and the exercise of mother-wit stiffened by a little elementary education, without any technical training either at the hands of organised educational authority or through the rougher methods of apprenticeship. The emphasis, in other words, is laid upon the boy who, in all probability, will spend his working days as one of a class which, though socially indispensable, can offer to its members few honours or rewards, and very little opportunity of self-improvement within its own limits. The boy of this class is not viewed with much favour by the educational reformer, who is usually more concerned to provide means of escape for individuals than to raise the general standard of the class as a whole. Yet it is on this class that the comfort, the security, the possible efficiency of all others ultimately rest. Loose talk about stunted faculties and limited opportunities often obscures the naked fact that until the arrival of the millennium there will be fires to be laid, streets to be swept, and hods to be carried. The performance of these duties is and will remain a social service, upon the efficient performance of which the whole body politic depends, and the well-being of the class upon whom this service devolves is at least as vital as that of any other class of workers.

It follows from this that, so far as the writers have drawn attention to possible improvements, they have been concerned, not with the means by which a few bright boys may break their "birth's invidious bar," but

with the methods by which the many commonplace ones may be fashioned into useful members of the community. But the suggestion of improvements has not been their chief object; it is rather to describe the life of the boys as they have seen it, and to draw attention to the influences for good and evil which their environment contains.

For the data on which this description is based they have relied entirely upon their knowledge of London boys, and do not pretend to have had experience of those of other towns. If, however, it should occur to any reader to question on this ground the propriety of the title of the book, which seems to imply that the investigation covers the whole of England, it may be pointed out that generalisations from the boy life of the metropolis are true of a much wider area. The Irish boy of St. George's-in-the-East, the Jewish boy of Whitechapel, the English boy of Holborn, Limehouse, Walworth, and Camberwell, offer probably as marked a diversity of characteristics as those of Liverpool and Leeds, of Birmingham and Glasgow. And, on the other hand, the sameness of their nature and the similarity of the conditions under which they live and work go far to justify the assumption that what is true of the boys of London is true in the main of the boys of other towns.

Another apparent discrepancy between the title and the contents may be explained here. A chapter on girls

is, perhaps, an unexpected addition to a book which professes to deal only with the life of boys; but those who know the boy in the street intimately will not need to be reminded of the part played in his life by other boys' sisters. No account of the influences which are moulding him between the ages of fourteen and twenty could be anything but incomplete without some reference to the girl in the background.

Turning from these preliminary explanations, it may be well to devote the rest of this Introduction to its proper function of introducing to the reader the working boy of London, no longer as an abstraction, but as the very concrete and offensively living reality he unquestionably is. You have met him often enough, for he is a ubiquitous person, known to everybody in one capacity or another—as office-boy, errand-boy, van-boy, factory-boy, boot-boy, or as plain boy, vociferous in the street. Of his surface peculiarities none is more prominent than the fact that he is rather too much in evidence in everyday life, and that his figure looms almost too large on the social horizon. Laws are passed for his especial benefit, and he has crept gradually into what many think a far too prominent place in the fiction, the journalism, and the platform of the day. He has been provided by the State with a free and costly education; and to occupy his evenings, would-be benefactors have supplied all sorts of clubs, classes, and institutions within reach of his home and within reach of

his pocket. His position in the family circle has become one of recognised importance, and he has made himself indispensable to the business and the industry of the country.

The change in his social status has brought about a corresponding change in his way of life. Even his personal appearance bears marks of the change. Collars and ties are now almost as common as rags were a few years ago; the bare-footed ragamuffin of popular imagination figures still as the frontispiece to well-meaning philanthropic appeals, but is no longer a common object of the streets. He is found occasionally in some of the poorest parts of London, especially in the Irish quarters; but even there the civilising influence of the Board School has made him the exception instead of the rule. And this superficial improvement may be taken as an index to a real improvement that has taken place in the boy himself. His views of life, his habits, and his character all alike show an appreciable step in the right direction; but undoubted as the change is, it is not more than enough to emphasise the need for further improvement. His views of life, though perhaps not so distorted as they were, are still narrow and crooked; his habits and character, though less alarming, without being less interesting than of old, do not yet form at all a satisfactory foundation for the duties that lie before him as a workman and a citizen. Is it to be wondered at? Let it be remembered that his education usually

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comes to an abrupt end just when that of the ordinary Public School boy is beginning. He is only fourteen when he leaves school to start work and to assume all the responsibilities of a family wage-earner. The necessity of having to work hard for his living at this early age, often among companions whose influence is at best doubtful, cannot be good for the boy unless there is something very definite in the way of ballast to keep him steady, and sadly often has the effect of destroying the home influence altogether. The result is a species of man-child, in whom the natural instincts of boyhood are almost overwhelmed by the feverish anxiety to become a man. It is at this age that he begins, with disagreeable precocity, to imitate the habits of his elders—smoking daily an unwholesome number of cheap and nasty “fags,” acquiring with painful pertinacity the habit of expectoration, which he will retain as an unpleasant peculiarity to the end of his life, and adding to his vocabulary the wealth of coarse and profane expletives which defile all his ordinary conversation with his mates. For his literature, if he has any, he chooses the halfpenny “comic,” or the still more insidious penny “blood”; for his week-end amusements a cheap theatre or music-hall on Saturday night, bed at twelve or one, with a “lay-in” till a late hour on Sunday morning to make up for it, a walk round the “’ouses” in the morning, followed by a starch-and-buttonhole promenade in the evening, probably with a

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girl; for it is regarded as only right that any boy over the age of fifteen should have one girl to whom he is supposed to be attached, and should take a lively interest in any others he may happen to meet.

These are some of the methods by which the boy is wont to proclaim that he has arrived at a period of independence. The wonder of it all is that he manages to remain really a boy at heart. Sensitive to a degree; ready to fall into depths of childish depression over trifles, yet quick to regain the almost abnormal buoyancy of animal spirits which are his undoubted birthright; disgracefully casual, but keen enough when his interest is aroused; a creature full of obvious shallows and unsuspected depths; superficially very sharp, though very seldom clever; unreasonably self-confident, but not yet self-reliant; exasperatingly suspicious, with that odd mixture of incredulity and credulity, both equally misplaced, which makes him so difficult to teach: such is the town boy's nature. It is an odd material, hard to mould and baffling even to those who know it well. But the contradictions in it are, after all, only the inevitable result of a premature face-to-face acquaintance with the hard facts of life; the obvious defects are neither natural nor ingrained. It has been said that the heart of a boy is half angel, half savage. In the boys we are considering there are no half tints: the lights and shades stand out in strong relief; but though at first view the lurid lights of the savage element alone appear,



there is a rich background formed of the finer shades of the angel element, waiting for the skilled hand to bring forward and develop till the two unite into a harmonious character. Therein lies the charm of it. The right man can produce almost as much impression on a boy in a month as he could on a man in a year; but he must first understand him. He must know, that is, not only the influences to which he may be made to respond, but those to which his nature is now day by day responding—the complex environment which forms the setting of his daily life, and is the unconscious educator of his body, and mind, and will.

And the aim of these essays is just this: to describe the everyday influences which make the town boy what he is. Yet not all of them, for so the task would be too great. The reader will not find, for instance, any detailed account of the effects of our system of primary education, nor of the ubiquitous and almost universally patronised Sunday-schools. Of these much has been written, and their influence is not likely to be overlooked or underestimated. But an influence which is, or should be, more important and all-pervading than any set teaching—that of the home and the family life—is less well understood; it is therefore dealt with as fully as it deserves. So, too, though in less detail, the conditions of his work and his play, his choice of a trade, the good or bad effects of different occupations in preparing him for his life as a working citizen, his

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choice of amusements, and the opportunities there are for recreation that shall be at once healthy and helpful to his growth; and to the account of these influences, which cover most of the life of the normal boy, there is added a chapter on what, we may hope, concerns the boy who is not normal—the influence of the law and its penalties, of the machinery which society has devised to keep his feet in the right path. Finally, in the conclusion, are summed up both the estimates of the present and the forecast of the future, with some indication of the dangers which seem most to threaten the next generation of our workers, and some suggestions for the direction of new effort on the part of those who care enough for the future welfare of our town populations to give a little time and trouble on their behalf.

The writers of the different essays are, of course, responsible only for the opinions expressed in their own contributions. In addition to them, the editor would acknowledge his debt to Mr. Hugh Blakiston, who originally undertook the task of editing the book, and, though compelled to relinquish it, has continued, nevertheless, to give very willing help. His advice and suggestions have been invaluable.



# STUDIES OF BOY LIFE

## THE BOY AND THE FAMILY

By REGINALD A. BRAY

"Parents, sisters, brothers, wives, and children, be they all to you as branches springing from the same stem. Sanctify the Family by unity of love, and make of it the temple wherein you unite to offer sacrifice to your country. I know not whether you will be happy, if you act thus ; but I do know that even in the midst of adversity you will find that serene peace of the heart, that repose of the tranquil conscience, which will give you strength in every trial, and cheer your souls with a glimpse of heavenly azure even in the darkest storm."

MAZZINI.

WASHING the shores of that small isle termed the West End of London, and running by a thousand narrow channels deep into its heart, is a vast and almost unexplored ocean of souls. The inhabitants of the isle regard this outlying region as the abode of impalpable shadows or, in imagination, people it with quaint, distorted creatures who have naught in common with themselves. The district and the fretting life hemmed within its boundaries are either totally ignored or excite feelings of vague wonder. They are, indeed, whirled through straggling fragments of this area, in

their passage into and out of town, and become conscious of unmeasured acres of smoke-stained dwellings that extend in grim, unbroken battalions to the far horizon. But the whole phenomenon is inexplicable, and the manner of existence to be found amid those wastes entirely inconceivable. It might well appear that if a "kindly comet" were to sweep into nothingness the ghosts who dwell therein, none would be found to mourn their loss or perhaps even to discover their annihilation.

Yet amid these four or five million human beings there is a stir and stress of life not altogether unworthy of attention. If by some strange chance a pilgrim from the isle outside penetrates into this region, he will light on scenes whose startling novelty will fill him with astonishment. This wanderer will discover that so far from the broad streets with which he is familiar being the most frequented, there is more truth in the assertion that the number of people present varies inversely with the breadth of the street. Out of the motley collection of living creatures scattered over the pavement and the road, certain specimens will not fail to attract his attention. He will find cause for surprise at the very miscellaneous apparel in which they are clad. The ingenuity shown in adapting to small forms garments which have clearly been accustomed to clothe persons of more goodly proportions, the fanciful colour effects produced by wedding together materials of the most

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diverse hues and texture, and the charming originality of cut and design, will all awaken a feeling of curiosity and pleasure. Their manifold forms of activity next call for observation; balls of every size whistle mysteriously past his ears; swift moving shapes, reared aloft on a single roller-skate, rattle by; artists are sketching portraits on any available surface, while ingenious mechanics are busily engaged in the construction of complex instruments whose purpose does not appear. In spite of the skill and power of concentration these tasks demand, all are taking part in a kind of rhythmic chant, unceasing, discordant, cheerful, and not unpleasing. Such is the wanderer's first introduction to the London boy. As the hours draw on, and twilight gives place to dusk, and dusk in turn to darkness, the numbers remain undiminished. Only after a weary and patient vigil does he discover that, one by one, the boys are beginning to vanish from the streets. Not till night is far advanced has the last disappeared or the silence of the dark hours quelled the babel of the day. One by one sundry buildings, of every shape and size, have engulfed the members of this noisy throng. One by one they have sorted themselves out into small groups, hiding away in various nooks and crannies to which they give the name of home.

Now I am anxious in this essay to do for the pilgrim what he cannot easily do for himself. I desire to follow the boy to his dwelling-place, draw a picture of his

home, and, if possible, estimate those influences which have their origin within the family circle.

What is meant by the word "family"? The question at first sight appears ridiculous; and yet, in all sober truth, it is a question that calls urgently for an answer. The meaning is in no way as clear and definite as is generally supposed. The word "family" belongs to that large class of words which everyone thinks he understands perfectly, just because they are always on his lips. Ask a man if he is anxious to preserve family life, and he will at once dazzle you with an imposing array of gorgeous epithets, concluding with a peroration wherein the illimitable veldt, the indefinite extension of the British Empire, and the purity of the family will triumphantly be proved at once cause and effect of one another. Ask him, further, to tell you what he wants to preserve in family life, and he will stare blankly at you, regarding you as an irritating, though possibly harmless, lunatic. He uses the expression "family" as a word to juggle with, as a form of incantation, or as a pointed weapon of offence and defence; but explain its significance, this he will not do. The soft-hearted vicar, for example, showers coal tickets and mean sums of money on his poorer neighbours because, as he puts it, these gifts keep the family together; but he neglects to explain what he wants to keep together. His hard-headed opponents inveigh against this practice, asserting in the most

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vigorous language that dole-giving destroys family life; but somehow they forget to say just what specific thing is threatened with destruction. Guardians gather together a handful of orphan children, interpolate a foster-mother, and pride themselves on having created a family; but one wishes they would explain a little more clearly the kind of effect produced by their creative activity. Thus the word "family" is ever on the lips of the philanthropist and social reformer. Things go merrily until advocates of conflicting schemes meet in battle; then a gloomy chaos descends on the scene, and all clear sight is blinded by the dust of an impenetrable misunderstanding.

Now if a family is a thing which can be created, preserved, or destroyed, it is obviously desirable to have clear notions concerning the subject of this creation, preservation, or destruction. As a matter of fact the word "family" is used in three senses. It implies a certain degree of blood-relationship; it denotes a certain kind of common life; or, lastly, it signifies a certain sentiment which accompanies and is the child of this collective existence. When men speak of family life and enlarge on its importance, they are usually thinking of the characteristic spirit that permeates and inspires the members of the home circle. In so doing they are entirely justified; they tacitly recognise the important truth that in some deeply hidden storehouse of sentiment lie at once the motive power of man's progress



and the source of all his richest joys. It is this sentiment they desire to create or to preserve. Unfortunately, as soon as they come to practice, they change the meaning of the word "family" and use it to signify merely a certain number of people dwelling beneath the same roof. Keep them together, they say, for a sufficient time, and you get the family sentiment, much in the same way as if you keep an egg warm for a sufficient period you will at length get the chick. But the process is not so simple. Mere aggregation does little to breed sympathy. I am not specially drawn towards my neighbour because I am compelled to live with him; and a common life is apt to lead to mutual disenchantment rather than to mutual attachment.

Now, although the mere act of inhabiting the same house has in itself no magic capable of inspiring the inmates with a peculiar affection for one another, yet somewhere amid the details of the common life of the home must be found the secret of its power. The family circle is a world in miniature with its own habits, its own interests, and its own ties, largely independent of the great world that lies outside. If we take to pieces this small world, we shall find that it is built out of certain elements, some apparently insignificant, others more imposing, but all alike contributing its share in the general effect. It is these elements which admit of preservation and destruction. So far as regards the boy—and with him only am I directly concerned—

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these factors of home life may be divided into six classes—the common dwelling, the common meals, the home training, his recreation (including domestic employment), his relations with the other members of the family, and, finally, the work for which he receives wages. Under one or other of these six classes all the activities of the family can be grouped. The family sentiment is a product of these different factors, and varies as they vary, expanding or contracting with every change in these contributory elements. Thus its present condition may be determined and its future predicted by an examination of these six more or less independent forces.

I shall naturally be asked for the sources from which I have derived my information. I depend largely on my own experience. I can make some claim to an intimate acquaintance with the people of whom I write. For several years I have occupied a tenement in a Block-dwelling. There, at any rate, so far as the children are concerned, I have had a very large circle of friends. The children needed but the slightest encouragement to pay me frequent visits; indeed, the chief difficulty lay in keeping them out. Seen in this manner, one or two at a time, they talked in a free and open manner of their doings at home or in the street. I have also at various times had children staying in the same house with myself. My own personal knowledge I have endeavoured to supplement and correct in two ways. I have talked over the question of family life with

ministers of various denominations, with school teachers, with medical men of experience, with district visitors and rent-collectors—in short, with anyone who could make claim to first-hand knowledge of family life in London. Lastly, the head teachers of several elementary schools have kindly lent me much assistance by obtaining from the children compositions on such subjects as “A history of a day of my life,” “How I spend my leisure,” “What games I play,” etc. I have in my possession many hundreds of these essays. As will appear later from quotations, the children write perfectly naturally, and their own records throw much light on the details of their life and the daily routine.

As regards literature on the subject, there exists little or none. In the writings of Miss Octavia Hill and Mr. Charles Booth some information, touching family life, will be found. But apart from these authors no one seems to have considered this branch of social science as worthy of any serious study. To generalise becomes, therefore, a task of exceeding difficulty. Indeed, many of my friends have urged me to abstain from all generalisation, while others have gone so far as to maintain that there are no general truths concerning family life in London. Now, if, as is certainly the case, hasty generalisation is an evil, an even greater evil attends the rather common practice of marshalling a formidable battalion of solid, stubborn facts, enlarging on their hidden significance, and, finally, exhorting the

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reader to draw the conclusions for himself. This he will most certainly do, moulding the facts to suit his own purpose, and arriving at results which will surprise no one so much as they will the author himself. A wiser course is for the author, who has at least personal acquaintance with the subject, to group his material together with the view of exhibiting certain general laws or tendencies. I have endeavoured to follow this plan myself, though I am well aware that this essay cannot be regarded as more than a preliminary study of family life.

### I

#### THE COMMON DWELLING

For some brief span of the twenty-four hours, often, indeed, not until the night is far spent, the streets stand silent and deserted. The waves of tumultuous life, which have surged over the roads during the day, are sunk to rest. Beneath the spell of darkness the driving mist of souls has been dispersed, gathering itself into drops which roll away and are lost in sundry hiding-places. Each drop is a family, and each hiding-place a home. The common dwelling or home is the very essence of the family; what idea shall we form of the home of the London boy? Shall we take as accurate the picture drawn by the needy missionary who possesses a large heart but an empty pocket, and hopes to fill the deficiency of the one by means of appeals

that have their origin in the superabundance of the other? He would have us believe that the house echoes with the cry of suffering children and the broils of insensate parents, that the day is filled with acts of wanton cruelty, while the night shrieks aloud with recurrent orgies and deeds of unutterable shame. Or recoiling from such visions of horror, shall we turn to the counter-picture? We shall then attribute to each boy, somewhere amid the tangled maze of streets, the possession of a home where bright fires glow and happy faces smile, a sure place of refuge to which he may turn when he is cold and weary and hungry, and find satisfaction of his need. Is the one or the other picture true, or are both mere products of idle sentiment, adorned with the wayward colours of imagination? As a matter of fact, the one is as true as the other; examples of both may be found. And here we are brought face to face with a difficulty that will recur again and again. There is no such thing as the common dwelling; there is no such thing as the London boy. There are dwellings and boys in endless variety, but no one of them can be singled out as typical of all the rest.

To describe all dwellings is an impossible task; to single out one for exclusive attention only leads to a tangle of misconceptions. I follow here a middle course, and divide my boys and my dwellings into three classes or types. In the main, type number one refers to the inhabitants of one and two room tenements; type

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number two embraces families that possess three rooms ; while type number three includes those fortunate people who can boast of more than three rooms. These divisions correspond more or less accurately to the divisions of the people into casual workers (or loafers), unskilled labourers, and skilled artisans. It is true that many of the unskilled labourers have only two rooms, while frequently the artisan occupies but three. When this is so, the family life in each case falls below the level attained by the remainder of the same social grade, house-room being the predominant factor. In what follows I am thinking of the casual worker in one or two rooms, the labourer in three, and the artisan in four. I have preferred to use the word type rather than class in order that I may not seem to imply the existence of sharp lines of demarcation. Mr. Charles Booth, in his poverty maps of London, groups the streets into various classes, each distinguished by a different colour. In the black and the dark blue streets of these maps are found the most numerous examples of the first type ; in the pale blue and the violet district, type number two is prominent ; while the pink and the red quarters are the home of the majority of the third or highest type. Here, as there, endless divisions and subdivisions exist ; type runs into type as one colour merges in the next, and, as in life itself, no hard ruled lines can be drawn. Classification can only be judged by taking into account the purpose for which it is intended. I am concerned

here only with the broader aspects of family life in London, and any elaborate system of classification, while leading to no more accurate results, would only blur the general picture.

With these preliminary cautions I will essay a picture of the common dwelling, beginning with the first or lowest type. The street itself has certain general characteristics, easy enough to recognise though hard to describe. It is not necessarily very narrow; indeed, frequently, compared with the height of the houses, it possesses quite adequate breadth. It is probably a cul-de-sac, or is connected with an adjoining street only by a narrow passage, and is seldom if ever a thoroughfare. The houses, two or three storeys high, are, for each street, precisely alike in height and style of architecture. They look for all the world as though they had been squeezed out by some gigantic machine many years ago. The roof is either flat or slopes from the front down towards the back. There is neither yard nor garden; each cottage is supported on three sides by its immediate neighbours; indeed it needs all the support it can obtain. From many of the windows anything which could be termed a blind or curtain is absent; and here and there, to guard against prying eyes, remnants of a shawl or sheet are stretched across the opening. The panes are often cracked and broken; squares of brown paper, pasted over the holes, are the most popular methods of excluding the outer air.

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Several of the windows are closely shuttered and barred, a sign of recently ejected tenants and premises temporarily left vacant. The street doors are frequently absent, and, when present, are invariably open. The doorways, the road, and the pavement are littered with a miscellaneous collection of men, women, children, fragments of bread, rotting vegetables, and other decaying refuse.

In spite of the breadth of the street a heavy atmosphere hangs over all, stagnant, oppressive, irritating, and unwholesome. The whole street suggests some article that has for long years been let out on hire to innumerable owners and now is past all repair. Each tenant patches the damage of his predecessor, adds his own contribution to the general dilapidation, and then hands it on to his successor, a flimsily adherent aggregation of cracks and holes and yawning chasms.

A narrow staircase leads upward from the open doorway, unlit save by the light which filters in from below. The steps look rough and worn into holes, and the sides are left unprotected by banisters which have long since been removed to feed a fire. On the first floor a door, half concealed by a curtain of darkness, gives entrance to the tenement. This consists of two rooms, the one opening out of the other. The atmosphere of oppression and confinement is now almost overpowering. A peculiar odour, possessing quite unique characteristics, and suggesting a combination of the tanyard, the



old clothes shop, and the dustman's cart, pungently stings the nostrils of any chance visitor. Of intended ventilation there is no sign; the windows are closely shut and the external air penetrates with difficulty through crevices of the ill-fitting and faulty woodwork. The floor is paved with fragments of linoleum, patches of greasy carpets, and tangled strands of wool, laid one on top of the other two or three layers deep. The furniture is scanty, and consists of such articles as have no market value, or are too bulky to find a resting-place in the pawnshop. A large bed swallows up a considerable area. A collection of rags, scraps of old garments, dismembered sheets, and isolated portions of a mattress serve to cover its surface. A few chairs and a tottering table, on which are strewn choice selections from the meals of the last week, complete the furniture. On the dresser are scattered sundry pieces of earthenware, a few mugs and glasses, a teapot with a cracked spout, and a frying-pan. One or two cuttings from the *Illustrated Police News*, a few antique and dilapidated picture-frames, hung at every conceivable angle to the wall, sum up all attempt at decorative display. The paper on the walls is in keeping with the surroundings; one corner, where a patch of damp is manifest, flaps idly to and fro. The ceiling presents a carefully executed study in every shade of grey. The general impression left on the mind of the visitor is one of gloom, decay, ugliness, and despair.

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Of living occupants, excluding, of course, insect life, the number will usually be small except at certain hours of the day. A woman of large dimensions may perhaps be leaning out of the window, as she gossips with a neighbour across the street. A variegated assortment of babies crawl about the floor, gnawing vigorously at any object possessed of edible qualities, scantily clothed, red-eyed, grimy, and exceedingly cheerful. A little girl, whose frail delicacy and transparent colouring stand in amazing contrast to the robust appearance of the mother, strives to rescue the babies from perils which threaten to bring their brief career to an untimely end. The dismal environment, so depressing to the observer, is by no means reflected in the faces of the habitual inhabitants, who are, for the most part, happy, cheerily indifferent to the shabby squalor of their surroundings, and as satisfied as most men with their lot. It is this genial content, this willing acquiescence in a state of existence, to the outsider altogether intolerable, that is the most hopeless feature of the whole scene. The people are unconscious and careless of their mode of life, dwell entirely in the immediate present, and forget alike the pains and pleasures of past experience. Such in broad outline is a sketch of the common dwelling of the first type. Examples, though not in any large quantity, may be found in most quarters of the town. Here are gathered together, as to a final place of refuge, all objects that have served their day. It is a

sort of cemetery of everything, animate or inanimate, for which the community can find no further use.

When members of Parliament and other professional philanthropists talk blandly of the dwellings and conditions of "the poor," under which convenient title they usually include everyone who earns his living by manual labour, from the idle loafer to the most skilled mechanic, they usually have in their mind some such picture as the above, though the colouring is probably of a darker and more funereal shade.

Between type number one and type number two it would be easy to interpolate a series whose members differed imperceptibly from one another. But I will pass over intermediate variations. The general appearance of the street, where examples of type number two may be found, is one of order and decent cleanliness. The road is open at both ends; refuse and garbage no longer choke the gutters, and though innumerable children make progress difficult, the idle loafer, male or female, does not assert his presence so forcibly as in the first type. Passers-by have evidently some business which engages their attention; and the air of dead stagnation gives place to eager stir and activity. The houses still present an aspect of mechanical monotony, and possess neither variety nor individuality. They do not, however, suggest the idea of barracks; the roofs run up to an apex in the middle, and the squashed and depressed look noted before is for the most part absent.

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ere is a gap between the backs of two adjoining  
vs of cottages. The dwellings themselves are in  
air state of repair; the windows are intact, and lace  
tains, struggling to be white, cover every opening.  
e street door is closed, but a string, running through  
ole in one of the panels, enables a child to enter at will  
hout knocking. Each family has exclusive possession  
one floor, containing three rooms. A back door  
ds into a small yard or garden, shared by the different  
ants and providing a drying-ground for the washing,  
pace for play, and occasionally a field for the cultiva-  
1 of a few flowers. Of the apartments two will  
tainly be used as bedrooms, while the third, the  
chen, is the living-room of the family, and will  
bably be free from the encumbrance of a bed. The  
or is covered with linoleum, and a rug is stretched  
oss the hearth. The atmosphere of the room, if  
ittle heavy and close, is at any rate free from un-  
asant odours. The windows possess blinds, and,  
ept in the hottest weather, are hermetically sealed.  
the first type of dwelling the absence of furniture  
t space for free-and-easy movement, but this is no  
ger the case. The whole area is blocked with  
irs, a large table, a horsehair sofa, and sundry  
er household goods, making rapid progress a matter  
extreme difficulty. The most conspicuous object is  
e dresser, with its load of gaily coloured crockery;  
ps and jugs hang from hooks, while plates and

saucers are artistically arranged on the shelves. The wall is hidden by a mosaic of garish oleographs, framed in heavy polished wood. Over the mantelpiece straggles a wilderness of quaint china ornaments, with a clock as centrepiece. The usual occupants of the room consist of the mother and her tiny children. The former is busily engaged in the distracting work of tending the babies, cleaning the room, and cooking the dinner. She has a worried look, as well she may have, suggesting that the burden of life rests too heavily upon her shoulders.

Room and occupant have something in common; both display evidence of effort expended, and on both is vividly stamped the sign-mark of recurrent failure. The pictures on the wall, the cherished collection of china ornaments on the mantelpiece, and the rug spread upon the hearth, all speak of home and homeliness. But the wear and tear of a large family, the manifold uses to which the apartment is put, and the entangling crowd of table and chairs, mangle and washing tub, create an atmosphere of confusion and cramped discomfort which neither skill nor labour can effectually banish. The mother seems half aware of this baffling discord; and herein lies the pathos of the situation. One feels that here, in some strange wise, is a group of human beings of whom the community never makes the best use it might, and to whom it vouchsafes neither adequate scope for development nor due reward for

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all their patient toil. The first type was distinguished at once by the absolute discomfort of the dwelling-place and the cheery indifference with which this condition was regarded. In the second type the failure is only partial, but is accompanied by a dim consciousness of the futility of all effort. While more hopeful as material for future progress, this class, in its present state, is to the observer a cause of the most profound dissatisfaction. Its numbers, corresponding as they do closely to the numbers of the unskilled labourers, form a large fraction of the permanently resident population of London. They attract little attention, seldom rise into prominence, and for the most part live out their lives unnoticed and unknown.

With type number three comes further progress. The streets are clean, well kept, and orderly. During the greater portion of the day they are nearly empty of children, presenting thereby a striking contrast to the former types. Where old houses still exist, the various cottages possess individuality and character, each one differing from the next. It is, however, unfortunately true that the modern passion for machine-made goods, with their utter lack of any distinctive originality, has set its mark on the design of houses. The new streets, where the jerry-builder has established a firm and baneful footing, display the worst examples of the insolently obtrusive villa. Every house possesses a curtained bow-window, and every curtained bow-window a palm, and

every palm emerges from the centre of a china pot. Each door glistens with varnish, at any rate for a time, and boasts an immaculate letter-box surmounted by an immaculate brass knocker. Nowhere in London do streets exhibit a more precise uniformity, in every external attribute of the dwelling, than they do here. In the former types the inhabitants did at least impress some of their idiosyncrasies on the outside of the dwelling; but here, seemingly, men are driven to submit to some planing and polishing process that removes and smooths down all knobs of individuality before they are permitted to occupy one of these spotless tenements. There can be little doubt that precise uniformity of environment does tend seriously to root out any distinctive traits of the inhabitant, and so leads to that most undesirable of all products, a uniform type of character. But at least the inside of the cottage can make some claim to the title of home. The staircase is brightly lit, and the steps are covered with carpet. Through the back door can be caught a glimpse of tiny gardens, with scraps of grass and patches of colour. Of the four rooms, two at least, and in some cases a third, will be bedrooms. The kitchen—here also the chief living-room of the family—is bright and cheerful. A gaily coloured linoleum covers the floor, a table scrubbed clean and white stands in the centre, and a well-furnished dresser forms a pleasing feature. The room is not encumbered with a load of chairs and other

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domestic utensils, and so possesses an air of space and freedom not seen before. In every instance the house can boast of a parlour—a chamber set apart for solemn functions and esteemed visitors, and carefully protected against sacrilegious use on ordinary days. Here, indeed, will be found a superabundance of well-preserved furniture, the pride of the home, including in all probability a piano and a sewing-machine. A table in the middle, covered with a bright cloth, groans under a load of books, prizes, and souvenirs of sundry trips to the seaside. An overmantel, with a looking-glass and a forest of fragile china, catches the attention, while in the bow-window, on another table, stands the ever-present palm. The room is seldom used except on Sunday afternoons. To this fact are due at once the air of stuffy oppression and the irreproachable condition of the furniture. Everything looks well cared for, and betokens the presence of a thoughtful mind. Alike from animate and inanimate objects all signs of worry and struggle are absent, while prosperity is everywhere conspicuous. For the first time one feels that out of such a place a real home could be made. The prevailing note is one of a rather self-assertive superiority, and the thought remains that here at last is a class for which the community has provided adequate opportunity for effort and due reward for labour expended.

The vast majority of the dwellings of the working classes may be included under one or other of these



three types. Beneath the common roof lies hid the family life of the London boy. The word home suggests a place where the various members of the family meet together. The appearance of the home has now been described, but for the most part nothing has been said of the human beings who people that home. When do they meet? What is the general routine of day-to-day existence? The answer will, of course, vary with each type.

So far as the first type is considered, it is not easy to say when the children and parents meet. Life there varies little from day to day, or perhaps more truly from week to week, as Saturday and Sunday present slight points of difference. The general order of events is something as follows: If it is one of the days on which he elects to work, the father rises about five o'clock, finds his own breakfast, and then quits the house. Some two or three hours later the school children get out of bed, wash their faces, dress themselves, take a slice of bread-and-dripping, and go out. Sometimes the mother rises at that time and gets the breakfast, but in most cases remains in bed. At nine the boys go to school. At noon school is over, and the boys, after amusing themselves in the playground or street for an hour, go home to get some food. The mother meanwhile has risen, dressed the smaller children, performed the irreducible minimum of domestic work, and then left the house to gossip

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with a neighbour or earn a few pence by charing. On rare occasions she may cook the children some dinner, but as a rule they get what food they can find, and eat it in the streets; sometimes they receive a halfpenny to buy their own meal at a fried-fish shop. The boys then return to school, escape at half-past four, possibly go home for tea, and then once more turn for amusement to the streets. There they remain until it is dark, and often in summer till dawn begins to break, when at length they seek their dwelling and go to bed. In many cases the boys do not find their way back to their own houses, but take up their quarters for the night in the house of some friend. Sometimes they do not sleep in a house at all. In one case of which I have heard, three boys spent a fortnight in a wash-house on the top of some Blocks. There they lived an independent existence, getting their own food and attending school regularly all the while. Later, on being discovered by a policeman, they were sent to their respective families. On Saturday, when the schools are closed, no more time is spent at home unless the mother compels the boys to assist in the work of the house. The day is passed in the streets, the dwelling-place being visited only when food is required. Many, however, of the elder schoolboys undertake some form of paid employment, earning a few pence. A boy's own account of how he spends Saturday may be of interest :—

"I first got up from bed about half-past six and put my clothes on and had a wash. Then I went to work at B.'s, and swept out his shop, and then I did the window out. But after I done the window I had my breakfast and went in the shop again. I started taking out orders that came in. While I was taking the orders out Mr. B. went to the Borough market for some potatoes, cabbages, and some onions, but when he came home I had to unload his van. After I unloaded his van he went for some coal, which he sells at one and sixpence a cwt., but he got two tons of coal in. Then we had dinner about one o'clock. When we had our dinner I had a rest till about four o'clock when I had tea. When I had my tea I had to go and chop some wood, when it was time to shut up the shop. I had my supper and went home and went to bed, and the time was about twelve o'clock."

On Sunday the members of the family rise at uncertain hours ; the boys go out for a walk or loaf in the streets till about two o'clock. About this time is fixed the great meal of the week, Sunday dinner. Then, if ever, the whole family sits down together. While less important and less rigidly observed than is the case with the other types, this ceremony of a weekly meal is still a conspicuous feature in the life of the first type. After dinner the family drifts apart, the elder to the streets, and some of the younger boys to Sunday-school. Later they roam the byways in noisy gangs.

Week follows week with very little variation to mark the march of time. As brief a fragment of the boy's

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life as is possible is spent within the common dwelling, which offers him no occupation, and is entirely devoid of interest or attraction. The mother does not demand his presence indoors, while he himself has no wish to be there. The street and not the house ought probably to be regarded as the home, or meeting-place of the family. It is, however, probable that the boys see more of their father than is the case of the next type; often a great deal more than they desire. His work, such as it is, lies near at hand; and can be taken up and dropped as the whim seizes him. Of any affection, either for the home or for the street, I can find no shred of evidence. The continual change of residence suffices to prevent any feeling of this kind. As a positive factor in the education of the London boy, belonging to the present type, the common dwelling is of the very slightest importance. As a negative factor, preventing the development of a healthy home life, it naturally merits careful consideration. The common dwelling may fail to be a home for two reasons. It may be too small conveniently to contain the members of the family; or it may be too large and unwieldy for the establishment of any conscious common existence. The present class suffers in both ways. If the tenement is regarded as the common dwelling, it is clearly too small, and the family is squeezed into the street. If, on the other hand, the street and the houses of which it is formed are taken as the unit, then clearly the common dwelling is too vast

and cumbrous, and comes into the same category as the barrack school. The numbers are so large that the individual is lost as an individual and becomes merely one of a multitude.

Neither parents nor children appear conscious that there is anything unsatisfactory in their relation to each other. To the boy the home is a convenient lodging-place and nothing more. Other lodgings may be equally convenient, and are often selected, as affording a welcome change. He has neither pride nor special interest in his tenement, returning to it without pleasure, and quitting it without the slightest touch of regret. Thus the effects of overcrowding are minimised by the fact that the overcrowding occurs only during small portions of the day, or more truly, of the night. The moral effect of this overcrowding and commingling of the sexes is, I believe, much exaggerated. Horrible cases can be, and are, found; but they are exceptional, and not typical. No careful observer can fail to be struck with the fact that, amid the conglomerate mass of coarse vulgarity prevalent in this class, a comparatively high standard of purity is maintained. The inhabitants do undoubtedly sink near the level of the animal world; but at least the brute beast is free from many of the amenities that distinguish his more highly cultivated master.

In the second type, as already mentioned, the family usually occupies three rooms. At first sight, the conditions found there seem to prevail here also. Indeed,

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It is a matter of fact, the boys spend hardly more time at home than those just considered. Out of school hours they are either in the street or employed in some form of paid work. The boys' accounts of their lives bear this out. One boy, for example, writes as follows :—

“I got up five minutes past seven, I cleaned my boots and washed myself, I then had my breakfast. At a quarter-past eight I went and flew a kite. I then came into the playground and played a game of cricket until the second bell rang. We then went upstairs. After this we had a scripture lesson about ‘regeneration’” (and that in a Board School!). “At twelve o'clock we were dismissed. I stayed in the playground playing at cricket until a quarter to one. I then went home and had some dinner. At half-past one I went to the carpentry centre and finished my Oxford frame. We went home and I had some tea. At half-past five I went to work. I came home at ten o'clock and went to bed about a quarter to eleven.”

Or again, take the account of a smaller child, whose terse language gives an accurate account of the daily routine :—

“I arose at half-past seven, I had my breakfast. My sister got me ready to go to school. I came home at twelve o'clock. I went out to play. I had a game with a bicycle. I came home at one o'clock. I had for my dinner sausages and potatoes, I washed my face and hands, I came to school, I returned home. I had my tea. I went out to play. I did my lessons.”

School, street, meals, and bed alternate with one another here in much the same way as they did in the first type. But while the facts remain for the most part unchanged, their setting and colouring are very different. Another atmosphere seems to pervade the whole life; some sense of order and regularity begins to manifest itself; meals are at fixed hours; and the boys are expected home and sent to bed at more or less definite times. They return to their own tenements, and do not spend the night with some of their neighbours. As will appear later, home interests begin to develop; and if the boys spend their leisure in the streets, this is due more to their own choice than to the wish of their parents. The boys seldom see their father except on Sunday and Saturday afternoons. The hot Sunday dinner has now become a fixed institution, invariably found except in periods of the most dire distress. The mother does not display the utter indifference to the state of the dwelling or the habits of the children, conspicuous in the first type. Some sort of ideal of home she seems to possess; but to attain this ideal is beyond her power. She has the look of one who feels that things are wrong, and yet can see no remedy. She notes, for example, the evil influence the street exerts on the character of her boys, but does not know how to preserve them from its overwhelming attraction.

This type also offers examples of that peculiar affection for lifeless objects, which is one of the most potent

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factors in the development and preservation of the sentiment of home. If the home is distinguished by the magic power it wields over human beings, thereby endowing the most unattractive person, in the eyes of his relatives, with attributes of grace, beauty, and wisdom, to the outside world altogether invisible; it is no less remarkable for the spell it lays on the inanimate contents of the house. It singles out the most unpromising articles, a cracked teacup or a spoutless kettle, invests them with an element of romance and mystery, breathes into them a spirit of life, and makes them part and parcel of the family circle. This curious transfiguration of so-called dead matter is not infrequently found among members of the present type.

Among a few of the older streets, more especially in the Borough, the inhabitants have a real love for their dwelling-place. They cling persistently to it; and offers of a lighter and more roomy house afford them no attraction. Such a sentiment is not common, but examples may still be found. It is, however, a feeling doomed to disappear; its power is diminishing, and the new generation is less susceptible to its influence than the old. The demolition of old courts, the erection of the characterless product of the jerry-builder, the migration of trades, and above all the lust for change, the most insistent element of town life, all alike tend to weaken and destroy the old-world sentiment of love of home. But while the affection for the dwelling is on



the wane, to some extent this feeling has been transferred to the objects which the dwelling contains. So it comes to pass that, when people can no longer feel any affection for a temporary and shifting place of refuge, they are drawn strangely towards the only element of permanence the house contains: the tables and chairs and other articles of furniture, which together make up what they call "the little home."

It would seem that some love of things inanimate, a kind of mute testimony to the unity of the world, is essential to the well-being of man. This instinctive and elemental need finds its satisfaction in the pride and affection displayed for "the little home." No one will gain any insight into the lives of members of this type, or fathom the motives that lie at the bottom of their apparently wayward conduct, until he has grasped the significance of this expression. To people who do not think readily in abstract terms, and are driven to support their powers of imagination by frequent appeals to visible objects, this "little home that they have got together" is a storehouse of rich and vividly coloured ideas. Amid the ever shifting scenes of new dwellings, growing children, flitting neighbours, it is the one point of relative stability, and stands as the crystallised embodiment of years of labour, a living and tangible memorial of half-forgotten joys, and an abiding monument of the shadowland of the past. Those who seek to regulate the lives of others by the narrow rules of

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logic and clockwork routine, which they imagine guide their own, are apt contemptuously to term "the little home" the child of idle sentimentality or the fiction of an emotional observer. They look at the squalid and dirty contents of the home, and see there nothing but dirt and squalor. They lack the imaginative instinct, which can turn to scraps of wood, tangles of shredded wool and fragments of rusty iron and make these dead things live. They cannot understand that a chair with three legs may possess an intrinsic value which does not belong to the newest product of the furniture dealer, or that an antique sofa, with horsehair oozing from the pores, may yet store up in its fusty bosom tender associations and fond memories it would be vain to seek for in the smartest specimen of modern upholstery. In failing to take this point of view, in failing, that is, to grasp the infinite importance of the seemingly insignificant, they miss the point on which all turns. It is not, therefore, surprising that their carefully planned schemes of reforming a family are received with slight enthusiasm and rewarded with little permanent result.

The "little home" counts for much with this type. Its loss is irreparable and carries with it the destruction of some of the few ties that attach a man to the past. The boys themselves undoubtedly share in this feeling; they talk proudly of the home, and, the highest test of appreciation, they will lie freely in their pictures of its fictitious glory.

The chief difference, then, between the first and second types lies not so much in a different kind of life as in a certain change of atmosphere, that pervades and transforms the common existence. This fact will become clearer when other details of home life are passed in review.

In the third type this change of atmosphere becomes more conspicuous. A great part of the boy's time is, indeed, still spent outside the dwelling-place, but the life at home begins to assume larger proportions. There is more order and quiet in the house; a condition which reacts favourably on the boys. They are no longer seen hanging about the streets, loafing at the corners, or shouting noisily in the gutters. Though much out of doors, they go further afield and visit parks or museums; while, if they stay near home, they will usually be discovered in the school playground. In the evening many of them are indoors and have various occupations, of which perhaps reading is the chief. The following is one of many similar accounts of boys' lives that I have in my possession descriptive of this type :—

“I get up just before eight o'clock in the morning, clean my boots and then wash myself, then have my breakfast, and then go to school. I come out of school at twelve o'clock, I have a game till about twenty to one, and get home at a quarter to one. I then get the errands and then have my dinner, then wash my hands and face. Then it is twenty past one and then I go to school to have a

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little game and then go in our class. At half-past four I come out again for the rest of the day. I get home at five o'clock, then have my tea, get the errands, clean my father's boots, then wash myself, and then go out in the garden and have a game. The time is then nine o'clock. I then have my supper, have a read and then go to bed. I get up at the same time next morning and do the same things next day and so on."

Another boy gives an account of his doings for a whole week :—

"After tea I do my home-lessons. Then I go to a club at seven o'clock and play draughts, dominoes, gymnastics, etc., and then we come out at eight o'clock and from eight till about a quarter past I get errands for mother and at about half-past eight I go to bed. On Tuesday I go to a Band of Hope at half-past five and I come out at six, and if it is a wet week I go to a library on Monday dinner time and borrow a book and read it. On Wednesday I have a game with the boys in the street and if it is a wet night I take in a friend of mine and play at ludo, draughts, dominoes, race game, etc. On Thursday I go to the Happy Evenings and play at hockey, painting, etc. On Friday I do some of my work instead of doing it on Saturday and after I have finished I go in the streets and play with my friends. On Saturday I finish the rest of my work, look at the boots and the knives and forks, and do the windows. On Sunday I go to church at half-past two and come out at a quarter to four, then I go out for a walk or for a ride in the country."

These accounts give an accurate picture of the simple form of life habitual with type number three. Home becomes more important and the glamour of the street loses some of its fascination. As the dwelling becomes the scene of a more varied activity, we should naturally expect to see it draped in a richer and fuller garb of sentiment. To some extent this is true. I can recall cases where families are strongly attached to their cottage and refuse to move, even under the stress of the most persistent pressure. But this is not common. The depressing uniformity of the work of the modern builder seems to rob the houses of all that individuality which goes so far to distinguish one dwelling from another. At the present time there is but one model for the dwelling; its situation may be changed, but not its shape. The house remains a mere receptacle for the family; and when the father changes his place of employment he requires but little inducement to change one receptacle for another of precisely similar arrangement. Of the older type of dwelling, now fast disappearing, this is not the case. Here each cottage has its own idiosyncrasies of arrangements; and, when families have once grown to its shape, only a severe wrench can drive them to transplant their ways and habits, or adapt themselves to another form of dwelling. The love of the house cannot, therefore, be called strong, and as with the preceding type, this sentiment is decreasing both in strength and frequency. But here

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also a strong affection gathers round the inanimate contents of the home, following the family in its roving from place to place and affording some firm element of stability and permanence in the midst of ceaseless change.

This brief outline, depicting the general characteristics of the three types of dwellings and the influence they exert on the London boy, has left out of account one class of tenement. Possessing as it does certain peculiarities of its own, it merits separate consideration. The class in question is usually known as Block or Model dwellings. These erections are not reserved for the exclusive use of any one of the three types of families, though perhaps the second type is most frequently associated with this form of habitation. There is no rigid line of demarcation between the Block-dwelling and the house shared by several families. The one graduates into the other; and to say where the one begins and the other ends is not always an easy task. Yet certain general distinctions between the two exist. A cottage may, indeed, be occupied by more than one family, but in this case one person rents the whole house and sublets to others, while in Blocks each tenement is let independently of the rest. The cottage possesses only one street door for all the tenants, while in Blocks each tenement has its own door opening on to the common staircase. But the chief and most prominent char-

acteristic of Block-dwellings is their vast and cumbrous bulk. The problem set the builder has been that of housing the maximum of people on the minimum of superficial area. He has found the solution by taking a packing case for his model. This simple pattern admirably suits his purpose. It is stable and not easily upset; it is not costly; it is capable of indefinite extension in both horizontal and vertical directions; it is cheap, and satisfies, without doing more, the minimum requirements of the law; and, finally, on a couple of acres it affords lodging for all the inhabitants of a fair-sized provincial town. These advantages account for the growing popularity of this form of dwelling with the speculative builder. They do not, however, account for the enthusiasm with which they are regarded by many ardent philanthropists, who ought at least to ask themselves whether a tenement in a Block-dwelling is as attractive to the tenant as a share in a cottage. Does a home in a Block-dwelling possess the same significance as a home in a small house? The inhabitants themselves are alone qualified to answer this question, and with them the reply is no varying or uncertain one. They are unanimous in expressing their dislike for the Blocks and their preference for the less bulky form of residence. Talk to any inmate, and he will at once inform you that he is where he is only because he can find nowhere else a place of shelter, and will invariably assert that he is on the look-out

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for a cottage. It is true, indeed, that many will spend years in one of these places, but the majority seize the first favourable occasion to shift their quarters; tenant follows tenant in rapid succession, whole staircases changing their inhabitants in the course of a few years. Long residence in a Block-dwelling is due more to apathy and inability to face the worry of a move than to any preference for this form of habitation. At first the tenants eagerly seek a cottage, but when the search proves futile, they sink back into a sort of placid discontent incapable of spurring them on to any vigorous display of activity. But even long residence cannot unite them to their surroundings, and still, at any rate in idea, they are seeking to make real their dream of a "little house." The reason for this unanimous dislike is not hard to find. In the first place the chief characteristic of a home, that of privacy, is absent. The common staircase, the common dust-shoot, and the common wash-house, all reveal to the gaze of the general public the manifold secrets of domestic life. Exposed in one direction, the various families, by way of compensation, withdraw themselves in another, and, so far as in them lies, make boast of "keeping themselves to themselves." They avoid communication with their neighbours; they pass each other in sombre silence on the common staircase; and neither brook nor offer interference. The result is rather curious. The effect of throwing people to-



gether ends in the establishment of a permanent separation. In streets of cottages every person is known to the remainder, and all are linked to all by the bonds of mutual help and mutual sympathy ; whereas in the Blocks a person hardly knows by sight his nearest neighbour. The labouring classes are by nature of gregarious habits ; but compel them to herd together in a dense conglomerate, and the units will draw apart in sullen discontent and isolation. Another reason for the dislike of Blocks is the serious, dangerous annoyance caused to all the inhabitants of a staircase by the presence of a drunkard. Children meet him staggering up the common staircase and run away affrighted, or become callous, or even learn to find amusement in such scenes. The fathers often come into active conflict with him, while the mothers shrink from his oaths and coarse language. In the street such a person can be avoided ; but on a staircase there is no way of escaping his unwelcome attentions. A third serious and irremediable evil lies in the absence of a garden or even backyard, an evil which the occasional presence of a common courtyard does not go far to remove. The children are of necessity driven into the street, which can hardly contain the flood which pours from the densely populated dwellings. Boys of the third type, accustomed to spend much of their time indoors or in the garden, when they have a cottage for their home, are thrust out into the swirling maelstrom of the road-

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way, when the cottage is exchanged for a tenement in the Blocks. It is a matter of common observation that the boys, who live in the Blocks, are ruder in their manners, coarser and noisier in their habits, and more difficult to control than the boys who inhabit small houses, even though the social standing of both is identical. There is not the slightest trace of any affection for the tenement; and indeed one can hardly conceive how any such feeling could be aroused by this form of habitation. In short, a Block-dwelling lacks every attribute of a home, while it encourages every condition that weakens the health of family life. It possesses neither privacy nor individuality, and to the children offers no adequate space for amusement. On the other hand, its dense population tends to encourage the excitement always associated with crowds, and the feeling of personal insignificance always found in any form of barrack-dwelling. The rapid increase of these gloomy structures can only be regarded with serious forebodings. So long as they afford lucrative investments, it is useless to hope that the builder, who looks only to his own pocket, will adopt any other type of house; but one might at least expect that those companies, whose objects are professedly of a philanthropic nature, would seek to promote some less pernicious kind of dwelling.

This survey of the three types of dwellings and the habits associated with each has brought to light one

significant fact. As the house expands the family exhibits a more varied and healthier form of growth. Is the more prosperous home the cause or the effect of the increased accommodation? The answer will to some extent vary with the family, but it may be laid down as a general rule that, for the bulk of the people, an improvement of the dwelling is followed by, perhaps can alone make possible, an improvement in the home life of the inhabitants. In other words, if to members of the second type were given the dwellings of the third, the former would be raised a step higher in the social scale, and their home life would not differ materially from that of the latter.

In saying this I am well aware that I am running counter to the opinions vigorously expressed by many who have studied and written much on the condition of the poor. To them physical surroundings are, comparatively speaking, a matter of indifference. Family life, they urge, is entirely a question of the character of the parents, and stands or falls accordingly. The actual size of the dwelling is immaterial. Improve the character, and you improve the dwelling; improve the dwelling without first influencing the character, and the condition of the family remains unchanged. There is a great deal of truth in this assertion, and all honour is due to them for the high value set on character. But in the zeal of their cause they have assumed an unreal and paradoxical position, thereby

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exposing themselves to the ridicule of opponents and the cheap claptrap of the sentimental agitator. They have further laid themselves open to the serious charge of not asking themselves what they mean by their ideal of social progress, or even what interpretation they put on the word character. Now character alone can never be the ideal of the Social Reformer; what he desires is character displayed in a high and rich form of life. From the point of view of character nothing can be more admirable than the struggles of the widow who works her fingers to the bone, and wears herself out prematurely in the effort to keep her family together. But nothing can be more remote from the ideal of the Social Reformer. While awarding to this woman her due meed of praise, he cannot but feel regret that no wider field of action is offered to this patient endurance, or some less penurious environment provided, where toil and merit could be more fitly matched. He notes, too, how unavailing and futile are, as a general rule, the results of all her pains, and sees how injuriously that absence from home, her work demands, reacts on the character of the children. The girls grow up rough, unkempt and careless of appearance, while the boys soon pass beyond all control, and succumb ultimately to the bad influence of the street. And so failure awaits her at the end; and battle she never so bravely against the cruel fate of hostile surroundings, she can never lift her feet from the weary path that leads through the barren land of

toil unrewarded and hope for ever unfulfilled. Now if character be the final goal, then in a case like this the final goal is reached and the end of all desire attained. But the social ideal requires something more than character; it demands indeed character, but asks at the same time a suitable field and a fitting reward for the display of virtue.

Equally serious is the error made by failure to give a definite meaning to the word character. When the characters of men or classes are compared, this can only be done if character is regarded as a capacity to overcome obstacles. Judged by this standard it is by no means clear that the character displayed by the third type is superior to that exhibited by the second. Indeed, it is more than probable that the palm of victory would be awarded to the latter. If this be true, the richer family life of the third type must be due to some other factor than that of a more excellent character.

The position I am assailing would be past all comprehension if it were not regarded in the light of a salutary reaction against the weak sentimentalism of much current philanthropy. A family implies a common life; if the home is too narrow and confined comfortably to contain the members, they must be forced outside, and drift apart, the one from the other, until the common life becomes little more than a sorry farce. I should not have thought right to labour this almost palpable truism if Mrs. Bosanquet, in her last work, *The Strength of the People*,

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had not maintained a contrary position with a persistent and almost vindictive pugnacity.

Character and environment; the one reacts on the other. Neither is sufficient alone, and it is only when both assume a favourable shape that there is any chance of establishing a healthy and a vigorous family life. The difference between the first and the second type turns more on character than on house room, while the superiority of the third type is due in the main to the presence of a more kindly environment. To this extent, then, one may say that the vitality of the home varies directly with the size of the dwelling. It is undoubtedly true that people exist who are able to conquer every difficulty; but they belong to the class of moral genius and do not come into the same category as the normal man. Perfect character, like perfect faith, can work miracles, but, like faith, is so rare, that we ought as soon to blame the starving man for failing to turn stones into bread as the widow for the tears and rents in the fabric of her home. When the best has been said of us, we remain frail and puny creatures, stumbling upward with a stolid perseverance, half ludicrous and half pathetic. To some few heights we climb; but always above and beyond tower sunlit peaks of glory, reached here and there by one, but for us poor dwellers in the murky depths a goal for ever unattainable.

## II

## THE COMMON MEALS

The common dwelling is the outer shell of the family; within, as kernel, lie hid the many doings, habits, and customs that make up the miniature world of home. Of these, the most important, and indeed the most essential, are the common meals. Through all ages and in all places men have regarded the act of eating together as a ceremony charged with a deep significance. The stranger becomes a friend because he has sat at the same table, and the friend grows dearer after we have shared with him our food. The breaking of bread has become the outward sign of the most solemn of Christian rites, the communion of the living and the dead. There is, then, no cause for surprise if, as someone has said, something of the sacramental attaches to the family meal. This fact is but one example of the truth that the commonest acts are, in essence, the most mysterious, while man draws nearest to the secret of life when he comes in contact with its humblest functions. Of all with whom I have talked, there has been no one, whatever his opinions concerning charity may be, who has not recognised and paid a tribute to the importance of the family meals. No factor contributes more to the strength and vigour of family life than the simple habit of union at fixed times.

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All families make an attempt to provide four meals : breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. In the case of the first and second types, breakfast is of little or no importance. The family never meets as a whole ; the father and elder children rise and leave early, in most cases getting the meal for themselves ; later, come the school children and perhaps the mother ; and latest of all, the youngest children. The meal is at best a hurried one ; the boys rarely sit down, but receive a slice of bread-and-dripping which they eat or throw away in the street. In families of the third type the mother and school children breakfast together, but breakfast seldom consists of more than tea and bread-and-butter.

Dinner is a more serious function, and as a rule constitutes the most important meal of the day. If meat is provided, it will be provided then. In the first type occasionally, in the second usually, and in the third habitually, the mother cooks some form of food, even though this be only vegetables. The majority of the first type do not sit down to the table ; the boys either roam about the room like wild animals, tearing their food to pieces, or else devour their portion outside the house. The majority of the second type sit down—this is with them a test of a good home. The working members are generally absent, though in some few cases, where work lies near at hand, the father endeavours to return. When the family sits down, something resembling a tablecloth is spread over the table. With



the third type dinner is an orderly and decently conducted meal.

Tea is more of a movable feast. Boys of the first type come in when they please, forage for what food they can obtain, and vanish again, as rapidly as possible, into the street. The habits of the second type are more regular. Where the practice of the family is to sit down to dinner, they will also sit down to tea, though the food is often scattered amid the *débris* of the dinner, which has not yet been cleared away.

Supper, so far as the food is concerned, is for the children of very little importance; they take a slice of cake or bread-and-butter, which they eat without any formal gathering round a table. But the meal derives considerable importance from the fact that frequently the father has by this time returned home from his work. He probably sits down to a substantial repast, and is pleased if the children are present. This, of course, does not apply to the first type, where habits are so erratic that they can be included under no general rules. But with the others it is by no means uncommon for the elder schoolboys to meet their father then. Pretty pictures of the family may often be seen on a winter's night by a late visitor. The day's work is done, and the father is seated at a table for his evening meal. The children are scattered over the floor, growing like knots of flowers in the corners. The mother has drawn her chair to the hearth; the hard-ruled lines

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of her face are smoothed and softened, while the look of harassed weariness gives place to one of tranquil calm. Beneath the ruddy glow of the fire and the magic play of flickering shadows, the room has the romance of a scene fresh hewn from fairyland; a little islet of peace and security, against which beat in vain the multitudinous waves of the great city's thousand thousand lives, by those within unheard and unregarded.

Saturday, with its stress of domestic work, introduces into the meals an element of irregularity. The father is at home for tea, when the family often sits down together. But he goes out afterwards, driven away, on the one evening he might have been at home, by the floods of soap and water which the weekly bathing of the children entails.

On Sunday the routine of the week is again broken. Breakfast drags on by intermittent relays till eleven o'clock or later, as the various members of the family rise one after the other. The mother sets to work and cooks the Sunday dinner. A few of the girls assist, but the boys are usually despatched to Sunday-school or sent out for a walk; while the father leaves the tenement to visit the public-house, or sits at the window in his shirt-sleeves reading the paper. The meal is frequently not consumed till three o'clock, the hour when the public-houses close. At dinner on Sunday, alone of all the meals of the week, the family sits down together. In types two and three this is almost invariably true, and

even in the first the practice is not uncommon. It must be a very poor family, and one in sorely straitened circumstances, which does not enjoy hot meat on this day. The week's earnings, in a more or less mutilated form, have been brought home on the previous evening. The sight of this accumulated wealth suggests a hundred needs that cry for satisfaction, but none can vie in power with the attractions of the Sunday meal. In the streets on Saturday night meat is everywhere for sale. The coster barrows, with their ragged jets of flame and their mountains of sodden flesh, and, hard by, the butchers' shops gay with a thousand sparks of light and resonant with the cry of frantic vendors, all testify to the magnitude and enthusiasm of the supply. On the pavement the solid mass of men and women, boys and girls, laden with baskets or gripping greasy parcels, proves that the supply does not outrun the demand. At midnight, or in the early hours of Sunday morning, slabs of purple meat, gruesome and unappetising in appearance, may be purchased for as low a price as one penny a pound. Thus all classes of customers are catered for, and meat is brought within the reach of even the most scantily furnished purse.

An element of romance hangs over this Sunday gathering. It is not the survival of an old, so much as the creation of a new, custom. In country districts it possesses neither the significance nor the universality found in London. Gazing from windows of the Blocks

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into the tenement facing my own, I have often watched the preparation of this sacred meal. I have seen the girls seated at the window shelling peas or peeling potatoes; they are wearing their oldest week-day clothes, and their hair is tortured into stiff wisps of paper and unsightly rags. I have caught glimpses of the mother's face in the bright firelight as she bends over the oven. As the hours pass I have observed the father lay aside his pipe and draw on a coat of black, while the boys appear in the glory of Sunday suits. Then, too, the tresses of the girls are loosed, ringing their heads with a halo of rippling locks, and the shabby frock gives place to flimsy muslins or gaily coloured prints. Finally, in the dim shadows of the room I have visions of many people drawing chairs around a table. And I have never watched this scene without feeling conscious that I am the witness of some solemn and mystic ceremony, a kind of sacrificial feast celebrated at the shrine of family life, and laid on the altar of the home.

After dinner the family breaks up; some go to Sunday-school, others stroll out into the street, while the remainder slumber by the fireside. They seldom meet together for tea, this being a time for paying and receiving visits. Supper on Sunday is of little importance; all the energies of the community have been expended on the afternoon feast.

Certain other incidents of the family meal deserve

consideration. Manners and behaviour at table have no small influence on the character of the boys. With the first type nothing of the kind is found. But among families of the other types, when the members sit down and a cloth is spread, certain ceremonious habits and practices are usually observed. The children, for example, say "Please" and "Thank you"; and when one course is being helped, it is customary for all to sit patiently with their plates before them until all are served. As a rule the children take or ask for what they want and chatter freely. In certain cases, not confined to any particular type, a peculiarly strict code is enforced. The children are not permitted to speak at meal time and are compelled to sit in perfect silence. This seems almost an echo of the old-world method of training, and is not often seen. Indeed, as a whole, there is a general tendency to habits of greater noise and roughness at home. The second generation is worse than the first, and the third than the second. The life in the streets accustoms the boys to clamorous disorder, while the strain and bustle of the town weaken the parents' strength of will. All moves towards a state of aimless and contented drift; the easier course is pursued, and the easiest course is invariably to do nothing. Grace is occasionally, though rarely, said; and when this is done, the practice is usually due to the teaching of the religious bodies. In not a few cases, however, the parents seem to think

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that it is right for the little children to say grace, a custom which is not enforced or continued as they grow older. These matters may appear trivial and unworthy of consideration, but they play a large part in the creation and formation of the home atmosphere, and largely determine whether that place is associated with peace and order, or regarded as a mere vignette copy of the noisy street.

Except in the first type, the family meal is an important element in the family life of the boy. Children and parents like to meet at meals—and they meet but seldom at other times—and something of the old mysticism still overhangs the family breaking of bread.

Another question, suggested by Mr. Rowntree's investigations at York, is worth consideration—the question whether or no the children are adequately nourished. His conclusion seems to point to the fact that some thirty per cent. of the population are insufficiently fed, because wages will not allow of the purchase of adequate nutriment. But this conclusion cannot be accepted without large modification. What is or is not the minimum of food required for a growing child is a problem still unsolved by physiology. Experiment is difficult, and perhaps the only experiments that have been made are those of certain assiduous Germans who have hit on the pleasing method of half starving prisoners in order to note when a loss of weight first occurs. Next, Mr. Rowntree employs as his standard

of minimum requirements, the dietary tables drawn up by the Local Government Board for use in workhouses, a scale notorious for the waste and extravagance involved. In addition to this, the parents, even though they pay retail prices, can buy more cheaply than the Guardians. The latter buy only the materials of the best quality, while the little shops frequented by the former are the storehouses of goods which, unsaleable elsewhere, must be sold within a definite time or destroyed as unfit for human consumption. Finally, many parents would elect to go hungry themselves sooner than see their children suffer. All these considerations largely affect the accuracy of Mr. Rowntree's conclusions. It is probably truer to say that children suffer more from improper than from insufficient nourishment. This, at any rate, is the opinion of many medical men of wide experience. The children desire and are given highly seasoned food—fried fish, tinned meats, cheese, and the like—and can with difficulty be induced to eat a more wholesome form of food. But Mr. Rowntree never says that thirty per cent. of the population goes hungry, though this interpretation has sometimes, erroneously, been put upon his words. There is a broad gulf between insufficient food and hunger. From my own experience of children I cannot bring myself to believe that there are many who for any length of time suffer the pangs of active hunger. This is, however, the case with certain members of the first type. With

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them periods of gorged repletion alternate with periods of enforced abstinence. But with the other types an improper rather than an inadequate diet is the evil that demands a remedy.

### III

#### THE HOME TRAINING OF THE BOY

Food and shelter : these are the two essentials of the family. Without them no family could exist as such. But a home stands for much more in men's thoughts than a mere boarding-house. It is the child's training-school for the world and the wider life contained therein.

The elementary schools have now to a large extent taken upon themselves the duty of training the child's mind ; and, indeed, in many cases they are the only effective source of moral instruction. The parents are not, however, relieved of their duties ; the lessons learned in school will fail of their full effect until the parents co-operate with the efforts of the teacher. The parents of the first type give no help of this kind. They care nothing for the schools, send the children there grudgingly and of necessity, and regard them as an unmitigated nuisance, an obstacle to earnings and a hindrance to domestic work. Active opposition has almost entirely disappeared. Attendance at school, like



the payment of house-rent or the Sunday closing of public-houses, has at length come to be considered one of those unpleasant ordinances of Nature which may be evaded if possible, but not openly withstood. To send the child to school is the line of least resistance, and the vast majority of children attend with a very fair regularity. Probably the greatest lever in support of attendance is the desire of the boy himself. The teacher, by unflagging energy, has contrived to inspire the lad with a liking for regularity, or at least has taught him that its opposite is followed by consequences of an unpleasant character. He has no desire to stay at home, resists stubbornly any attempt to detain him, and in the end gets his own way. Apart from this unwilling acquiescence in school attendance, neither parent manifests any interest in the school; they care nothing for the boy's progress, and are entirely ignorant of the class in which he is placed. The father never visits the school, and the mother appears there only when boots may be obtained without payment, or when she desires to express in person the estimation in which she holds a teacher who has ventured to punish her boy. The parents have neither the ability nor the desire to help the child in his work; and the state of the home renders home-lessons a matter of impossibility.

Among members of the second type a very similar state of affairs is usually found. The parents are passively acquiescent in school matters. They do, how-

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ever, as a rule know what standard the child has reached. If the child does well, they are proud of his progress, and will tell any chance visitor that he is a "fine little scholar." They like to hear one of the small children recite a poem or sing a song he has learned at school, all the while regarding him with a wondering admiration. If asked, they assert emphatically that they value "schooling," though they do little to forward its interests. To them the erudition of the child appears mysterious and a trifle uncanny. They feel their own inferiority, and prefer to turn to subjects where their own pre-eminence is unquestioned.

It is not till the third type is reached that the school receives any active assistance from the parents. Here a real interest in the progress of the child is displayed. If, for example, a boy is not promoted at the close of the year, the parent visits the headmaster in order to learn the reason. If during the year the school is thrown open to the public, and the parents are asked to visit and inspect the work, hosts of admiring mothers throng the rooms, while not a few fathers beg a half-day off from their employment in order to be present. When home-lessons are encouraged at the school, the parents give facilities for their performance, and may even open the sacred parlour to the studious youth. In some cases, so far as their abilities permit, they endeavour to give assistance in the work, though not always with very successful results.

In one instance a father did the whole of a boy's lesson for him. The boy showed it up with much pride. Under ordinary circumstances the teacher would have awarded it the lowest mark, but knowing its source, he sympathetically inscribed on it the word "excellent," and the boy glowed with joy over his father's success. Often when boys are told to find out the answers to certain questions, they ask their father for information. If he is unable to solve the problem, he consults his mates in the workshop, and so endeavours to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Of this type it may fairly be said that to the best of their ability they co-operate with the school. Not infrequently when they come across, in the course of their work, objects of interest, they present them to the museums, and are usually willing, if occasion offers, to put their special skill at the service of the teacher. But to give instruction themselves, they have neither the leisure nor the necessary knowledge. As a general rule they remove the boy from school as soon as the age of compulsory attendance is passed. The prospects of immediate earnings loom larger in their imagination than the advantages of another year's education. Here and there the boy is permitted to prolong his school career; but such an example is entirely outside the common practice.

The subject of moral and religious training involves

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questions hard to answer; and any attempt to do more than draw a few general conclusions would lead to serious error. Many agencies, other than the parents, exert considerable influence on the character of the boy, a fact which adds much to the difficulty of the problem. It is not safe to attribute any virtues he may possess to the teaching of the home. The effect, for example, of the school is very great, and anyone who has intimate acquaintance with children can clearly trace the presence in the school of a good or an indifferent teacher.

One often hears both from adults and children that such-and-such a person is "no class." This seems to suggest that for each grade a definite kind of conduct is expected and exacted. Certain acts meet with disapproval, while to others praise is awarded. When these are sorted out and grouped together, they will be found to constitute a code, which varies from class to class. This code is important because it marks the normal level of morality reached by the class in question. To this level the parents strive to raise their children, in order to escape the disapprobation of their friends.

In the case of the first type it must be confessed that the code is not very comprehensive. Acts of wanton cruelty and violence are unquestionably condemned if the sufferer be a child or other weak person. The inhabitants display a righteous and emphatic indignation when they hear of such conduct, and the offender, were

he unfortunate enough to fall into their hands, would meet with very rough usage. Acts of flagrant dishonesty likewise meet with disapproval; but petty pilfering is looked on as venial, and is even encouraged. If, for example, a mother chances to find that the family exchequer or larder is unexpectedly replenished, she does not think herself called on to institute any rigorous inquiry in order to discover the cause of this surprising phenomenon. The chief moral training the boy receives may be summed up in the words, "Not to be found out." Artfulness, rather than truthfulness, stands out as the most distinctive ideal of conduct. But a theft committed on, or a lie told to, the parent meets with summary vengeance.

The second type adds a few more articles to the code, which now for the first time begins to assume any very definite shape. Dishonesty encounters a more persistent condemnation. Industry is encouraged, and cleanliness, so far as the more visible portions of the body are concerned, is enforced. Truthfulness receives little attention; obedience the parents endeavour to obtain, but their efforts are rewarded with singularly little success. Another lesson the mother strives to impress on the children is that of respect to elders and superiors. Why she should do this it is hard to say, but of the fact no one who visits homes of this class can be ignorant. This attempt also meets with stubborn opposition from the children, and the mother petulantly complains that

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children nowadays are so "daring" that she does not know what to do with them. Gratitude for a kindness, except where a foolish charity has perverted and distorted all natural relations of man with man, is a lesson taught with better results. Parents and children alike are astonishingly grateful for any act of consideration, and this gratitude is often quite out of all proportion to the favour conferred. A look of wonder steals across their faces at the thought that anyone should deign to note their existence; a look which somehow or other suggests that mute pathos often seen in the big eyes of a street dog. This distinctive trait is in keeping with the chief characteristic of the class, a patient, plodding industry looking for nothing beyond its rights, and receiving with a naïve surprise any addition to its bare wage. A plodding industry is perhaps the best description of the moral ideal entertained by these people, at any rate by those of the male sex, with whom I am alone concerned.

The third type does not add much to the code, though the code itself is enforced with much greater rigour. Bad language, betting, and gambling are regarded as serious offences in the case of children, though parents may indulge in these practices themselves, but consider that such habits are appropriate only to more mature years. Roughness and noisy brawling in the street are condemned as conduct unsuitable to the social position of the boys. Theoretically, truthfulness

is deemed a virtue, but its opposite is often so exceedingly convenient that practice lags far behind theory. The parents, for example, do not hesitate to send to others messages which both they and the children know to be entirely false. The chief difference between this and the last type lies in the fact that the patient industry and endurance of the latter is replaced by a spirit of flourishing and self-assertive superiority, which manifests itself in a demand for some external and distinctive behaviour.

One kind of action all parents condemn: conduct that is troublesome and annoying at home. Dirty habits, noisy ways, and rough practices in the house all encounter vigorous discouragement, but this disapproval is due much more to the personal comfort of the parents than to any delicate distinction between right and wrong, and rests entirely on a utilitarian basis. In another respect they all resemble one another. They have no idea of the meaning of character. Acts and not motives alone count for anything. Their lessons take the form of "do" and "don't," and never reach that higher level where the command is to "be this and not that"; and hence follows the small respect in which truthfulness is held. In many cases the boy has daily impressed on him by the lives of his parents the lesson that nothing matters, provided detection is impossible, while vice may become virtuous when whitened by a specious and ingenious falsehood.

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What, if any, religious teaching do the parents give the children? or what religious practices exist in the home? Variation is here more frequent than is the case with instruction in morals; and the division between type and type is not clearly accentuated. In each type certain families may be discovered among whom prevail sundry external forms of religion. But I am not concerned with these exceptional cases, and desire rather to ascertain the general level of religious life. Religious observances, it must be remembered, are often entirely unconnected with conduct; and a low moral state is often found conjoined with a very exact and precise rule of religious habits.

Much light has of late been thrown on parts of the subject by the carefully recorded census of the *Daily News* and the monumental investigations of Mr. Charles Booth. The results of the former are to many a matter of surprise, witnessing as they do to a larger church attendance than was generally anticipated. The conclusions of the latter, which contain a summary of the impressions of all the chief ministers of the various denominations in the metropolis, present a picture of the most sombre and unrelieved gloom. Neither, however, quite furnishes the information desired. They both deal with the manifestations of religion outside rather than within the family circle, and no necessary connection between the two can be assumed.

The first type is distinguished by the presence of



many Roman Catholics. Among these, in nearly every case, some form of religious observance is customary. Individuals attend Mass, but the habit of family attendance at church is rare, if, indeed, it exist at all. The priest is called in to bless the beginning and the close of life. Both priests and sisters are treated with never-failing deference ; when caught in a state of intoxication or uproarious riot the people display visible symptoms of shame, make numerous promises of reform in perfect good faith, but unfortunately seldom adhere to their resolution for any length of time. Insult to their faith is vigorously resented ; and the offender is often visited with most drastic punishment. The parents teach their children to respect both priest and religion, but the instruction goes no further. In a few rare cases the Rosary may be said in the evening, but this marks the extreme limit of religious practice that can be discovered in the home. Apart from the Roman Catholics and a few of the High Church Anglicans, no minister of religion exercises the smallest influence on these wayward people. It is no small credit to the life and energy of Catholicism that amid surroundings so utterly hopeless and among creatures whose lives differ but a hair's breadth from that of the brute beasts, the priests have yet been able to awaken and preserve some respect for themselves, some reverence for the Faith of which they are the representatives, and some dim consciousness of a spiritual world.

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The second type affords the field for the conflicting energies of the various missions and Churches. The parents send the children to Sunday-school, but, with one exception, to be mentioned later, give them no religious instruction. Respect for religion and its ministers forms no part of the boy's home training, unless we may include under this head that grovelling subservience, often forced on the children with the hope of obtaining a speedy reward in the shape of coal tickets, soup, and other material goods.

Among families of the third type likewise the religious training of children is as a rule left to the energies of ministers and Sunday-school teachers. The self-assertive superiority which distinguishes this class naturally finds a congenial spirit in the religion of the chapel; and one of the strongholds of the Nonconformists lies among these people. With them alone, instances can be discovered of a whole family attending a place of worship together. They are, of course, untouched by the prospect of receiving alms; and this competitive kind of religion does not tend to awaken among them any respect for the clergy or any enthusiasm for the forms of bribed hypocrisy which they see around them. In a few cases parents endeavour to teach the children the tenets of the denomination to which they belong. Here and there, mainly among Dissenters and Evangelicals of extreme views, they strive to inoculate their children with the words of some formulary, which remains as unintel-

ligible to their pupils as it is to themselves. To some extent this type lies on the borderland separating those who display a benignant indifference to religion and those who regard some external observance, such as Sunday attendance at a place of worship, as one of the necessary concomitants of a superior social position.

This summary of the religious life and teaching, found in the family, does not differ materially from the views of the clergy themselves scattered over the pages of Mr. Booth's volumes. But there is another line of research, not followed by Mr. Booth, which may perhaps lead to different conclusions. He has assumed that the best judges of the condition of religious life in London are the ministers and teachers of religion. So far as their own work is concerned, this is undoubtedly a fair hypothesis. When they tell us that they have failed to produce the result they desire, they have every right to be believed. Yet it by no means follows that their work is as barren of fruit as they imagine. The impression may, indeed, be very different from what they seek, but it is improbable that the immense amount of labour expended should be swallowed up without leaving a single trace behind. It would be equally surprising if the tradition of the race, which in the past has not been without its examples of religious movements pervading all classes, should have entirely disappeared. For myself I believe that if we look more deeply into the lives of these people we shall

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find there convictions, prejudices, and feelings ultimately religious in origin, and serving as a kind of background, vague and shadowy in outline though it may be, against which are viewed the shifting scenes of the immediate present. I will endeavour to gather together such information as seems to throw light on the subject. Facts bearing on this point can only be obtained by acquiring a more intimate knowledge of family life. It is unfortunate, that people, like district visitors and City missionaries, who might be able to furnish the desired information, are very little fitted to be accurate observers. They are anxious either to impose on those they visit their own form of creed, without any regard to any pre-existing beliefs, or to obtain records of a deplorable ignorance on spiritual matters for the pages of some missionary magazine. But certain phenomena, whose significance has not hitherto been grasped, are manifest to all.

There is the almost universal practice of the child's attendance at Sunday-school. This habit is usually attributed to a desire on the part of the parents to get rid of the children. But the explanation is singularly shallow and unsatisfactory. For the time, when the Sunday-schools are most thickly packed, is three o'clock in the afternoon. Now at this hour, in many homes, the Sunday dinner is not over, and sometimes not even begun. The children are often obliged to rise early from the table in order to avoid being late at school,

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or even to postpone their dinner until their return. Under these circumstances the mother has every inducement to keep the children at home, and no obvious reason for getting rid of them. Even when the meal is finished there is no clear cause why she should desire to have the home empty. No special work, to which their presence would be a hindrance, calls for performance, while in the process of clearing and washing up the girls, at any rate, would be useful assistants. Finally, this argument seems to assume that the children have a general tendency to stay indoors, and can only be driven outside the walls of the house by strong pressure. This is contrary to all experience, which goes to show that the real difficulty, completely baffling the parents, lies in keeping the child from the streets. The argument, then, though possibly valid in a few cases, certainly does not explain the phenomenon. Others would have us believe that the children attend because they like the school. This no doubt is true, but is in itself no solution of what they like and why they like it. The object and the cause of this liking equally demand an explanation. In the case of some boys the element of "sport" doubtless enters into their enjoyment; there is the chance of baiting a weak teacher or scandalising an anæmic curate. The affection felt for the teacher is another attraction. But this alone is insufficient; the children's attendance is as regular, and often more regular, when the Catechism or Method

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of St. Sulpice is in operation, a system where personal influence is at a minimum and discipline at a maximum. Now when any practice, not resting on compulsion, becomes universal, it must contain something either congenial to human nature or capable of satisfying some half-recognised want. Attendance at Sunday-school has this mark of universality; it therefore goes to prove that the ceremonies such as the singing of hymns, the reading of the Bible, the lessons in the Christian faith, and finally the quiet, which when present is always appreciated, in short that the general religious note struck, finds an echo in the child's heart. While these considerations explain the child's willingness to attend school, they do not account for the parents' desire to secure this attendance. Parents who frequent no place of worship themselves are sincerely anxious for their children to go to Sunday-school, and exert what influence they possess in favour of the practice. Even that rare creature in these parts—the secularist and the atheist—is no exception; he does not oppose, and often encourages among his children the habit of Sunday-school attendance.

Nor is this the sole example of the strange and paradoxical phenomenon of parents who regard religion as a thing suitable to the nature of a child and therefore, where possible, to be encouraged. When estimating the extent of the parents' teaching, I made an important omission that refers solely to the tiny children. In many

cases, not confined to any particular type, the parents do give the very little children elementary religious instruction. They will, for example, teach them to say simple prayers in the evening, sing hymns, and say grace at meals, even though they themselves do nothing of the kind. The elder girls also, not uncommonly, hear their small brothers say their prayers before putting them to bed. I have obtained evidence of this practice in various parts of London, not so much from ministers of religion as from City missionaries, district visitors, and others, who have a more intimate knowledge of the homes. This is only true of quite tiny children; when they grow older they are allowed to follow their own choice, and, without pressure from the parent, may continue or drop these habits.

A careful search brings to light many customs and practices of a similar character, which show that religion does stand as a sort of permanent background to the lives of these people, often doubtless miles away from the eager scene of the struggle of existence, but still perceptible and not altogether without influence. Religion seems to come in at the more important epochs of life. Children are usually christened, women churching, marriages celebrated in a place of worship, and funerals solemnised by a minister. Christmas festivities are not entirely dissociated from their origin, and even the masses, that throng the watch-night services at the close of the year, constitute a phen-

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omenon not altogether devoid of religious significance. Letters from parents to children often conclude with the words, "God bless you." One mother wishing to break the news of a sister's death to a child, did so by writing a letter in the dead sister's name purporting to come from heaven, and describing her state of bliss in that place. A boy of my acquaintance, more than usually innocent of any habits of religion or practice of morality, while staying away in the country, was accustomed whenever he passed a churchyard to take off his hat, compel the other boys to do the same, and walk past in solemn and reverent silence. Doubtless many of my readers will dismiss these examples with the remark that they are nothing but superstition. But when men ascribe a practice to the influence of superstition, they account for nothing, and are merely making use of a convenient term of opprobrium in order to excuse themselves from the labour of examining beliefs with which they happen not to sympathise. But one fact at least is clear: the home in which the boy is reared is not the seat of active materialism or of blind ignorance, but is penetrated with an atmosphere which, if not positively religious, is certainly not irreligious, and is at times shot with sparks and glimmers of true spiritual insight.



## IV

## FAMILY RECREATION AND WORK

Worthy people of all ages have delighted to enlarge on the importance of a man spending his leisure time aright. But their exhortations, excellent as they are in many respects, are for the most part useless, or often even pernicious in their effects from the neglect of one simple consideration. They care merely for what he does, and are quite indifferent to the place where he does it. They, for example, break into genial smiles when they see a boy playing billiards and draughts in a club, remarking that the encouragement of such pleasing practices will exterminate the hooligan and reform the London lad; but they are entirely oblivious of the fact that the said boy would, from a social point of view, be far better employed at home harassing his mother, breaking the crockery, or pulling his sister's hair. Habits of the first kind tend to break up, while those of the second contribute an indispensable element to family life. A boy cannot learn to find his amusements outside home without doing injury to the family life. The home ceases to be the centre from which his activities and his pleasure radiate, and shrinks to the level of a convenient lodging-house. In the growth of family sentiment few things occupy a larger place than the simple occupations and

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games, of which the dwelling-place is the scene. For my information on this subject I rely almost entirely on the words, written or spoken, of the children themselves. I have included under this section domestic work as well as recreation, since the two are not easily separated and have much in common.

In homes of the first type practically no form of recreation can be found. The centre of the boy's life lies in the street, and his leisure time is spent there. His presence is not desired indoors, and the exigencies of the house work are so slight and so little felt that he is not often called to lend his aid. Occasionally he fetches the errands or neglects the baby in the street for a few hours. In rare instances a boy with a taste for reading borrows a book from the school library and thumbs it into tatters at home. The only kind of amusement inside the house in which the family joins is a "sing-song" on a Saturday or a Sunday night. A few neighbours gather in a friend's room, bring with them sundry noisy instruments, and play various music-hall ditties, all lustily shouting the choruses and busily drumming with their heels on the floor, a proceeding which causes much pleasure to themselves, but considerable annoyance to the adjoining tenants. Among a few of the Irish the old folk will tell the young ancient legends and fairy stories. This practice, once common enough, is now dying out. London, as seen by these people, does not lend itself to romance. Outside the house the

family has no common amusements beyond an occasional noisy beanfeast.

The second type of dwellings is also distinguished by the narrowness of its boundaries; and here, too, the boys must look for their amusement outside the walls of the house. But the home and home interests begin to assume larger proportions. The boys' accounts of their day's work contain some variations from the monotonous theme of school, meals, street, and bed. One boy plays ludo with his sister in the evening, another a game of darts with a brother; dominoes, draughts, cards, and fretwork are occasionally mentioned as forms of recreation pursued indoors. Reading is, however, a very common method of passing the time. The sum total of these pursuits does not indeed tell up to any large amount, but yet forms an appreciable factor in the life of the family.

But the chief distinction between the first and second types lies in the backyard or small garden which the latter possesses. This useful appendage to the dwelling, even though shared by more than one family, opens out a rich field for the development of new interests. Rabbits are often kept in a hutch, and thrive in the most prolific manner; pigeons are hung in a cage just outside the back door; fowls are encouraged, and even ducks may flourish with an occasional swim in a tub of water. A few flowers are grown in the garden, which in addition affords room for a mild game of cricket or

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football. All this may seem exceedingly trivial to the general reader, but as a matter of fact the small outgrowth of the dwellings possesses a significance not easily overestimated. The boys are indeed crushed out of the house, but can overflow into the yard, where various hobbies occupy their attention and invest the dwelling with a new colouring and a new importance. The distinction of a lodging-house and a home turns largely on the presence or absence of this humble adjunct. Its absence from the Block-dwelling is alone sufficient ground for the condemnation of this popular form of architectural enterprise.

Outside the home the family seldom indulges in any form of common amusement. Each member has his own kind of recreation and follows it irrespective of the rest. There is, of course, the recurrent beanfeast; and not infrequently at Christmas-tide the family goes to a pantomime. Here and there the boys give pleasing descriptions of an excursion into the country, made in peaceful fashion and free from the noisy and garish accompaniments of the annual outing. There is something homely in the following picture, drawn by a boy :—

“Sunday I arose at six o'clock in the morning with my father and mother and put a kettle of water on the gas-stove for to make some tea. My father then cut the bread and spread it with butter. At half-past six we had finished our breakfast and equipped ourselves for a day's outing. I carried the provisions in a bag, and we started for Chisle-

hurst at seven o'clock. We reached the Tiger's Head Tavern, where my father bought some gingerbeer for us and had a glass of ale for himself. The time was about ten o'clock when we arrived at Chislehurst, when we sat down under the shade of an oak tree, from which, after much climbing, I secured an oak-apple. For the next hour we wandered about picking blackberries which grew plentifully on the bushes. At the end of that time we sat down to some dinner, which consisted of a drop of herb-ale and bread and butter with a few blackberries. When we had finished eating, we went towards Sevenoaks, where we obtained some large cones and a few ferns. At about six we started home with about seven pounds of blackberries in our possession. It was about nine o'clock when we reached home, where we had supper and retired to bed."

On Bank Holiday the family frequently journeys to some neighbouring park or place of amusement. In the summer, after tea on Sunday, the father often takes the children for a walk, or they may go for a ride on a tram.

A considerable amount of domestic work falls on the boy's shoulders; this is especially true if he possess no sisters. "I got up and lit the fire"; "I got up at seven o'clock and got my father and mother some breakfast"; "then I clean the knives, forks, spoons, and windows"; "I did the copper and scrubbed the stairs down"; "I wash all the yard down, then clean the knives and forks, and then the fire-irons"—are all phrases that occur over and over again in the boys' own

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accounts. The following is a characteristic picture of the daily routine :—

“When I get up I go and feed my pigeons. Then I wash and brush my boots ready for school. After that I have my breakfast and go for some errands. Then I go to school from nine to twelve ; then I go home and have my dinner. After dinner I wash up the dishes, and then I go out to play till half-past one. I go to school in the afternoon from two to half-past four, and when I come out I have a game of cricket till five o’clock. I then go home to have my tea and to clean my father’s boots. I go out to play until seven o’clock, and then I go in to do fretwork until nine o’clock. I help my brother from nine till ten o’clock to engrave on metal. Then I get out the things for the breakfast and set the table ready for the next morning. Then I have my supper, and sometimes I clean my boots ready for the next morning ; then I go to bed.”

Washing-day always finds plenty of work for the boy. Minding the baby, lighting the copper, hanging out the clothes, turning the mangle, are all tasks he is in the habit of performing. One lad, after a minute account of the proceedings, concludes with the graphic words, “And mother has the devil in her for the rest of the day.”

The hawker and coster class, which in the main belongs to this type, deserves special mention. They are distinguished for a considerable amount of strong, if rough, family affection. This is probably due to the fact that the members see more of each other and are

more thrown together than is the case with other sections of the community. The boys take an active part in the trade, and though not much indoors, usually accompany their parents in the streets. The donkey, the barrow, the stock-in-trade, all give the boys interests and employment associated with the home, and serve to render its memories richer and more permanent. The following account is one of many, descriptive of the manner in which the coster children spend their Saturdays :—

“I got up and then washed myself, and then I had my breakfast at eight o'clock. Then I helped my father to harness the donkey, and I took him round to the stable where the barrow was and harnessed him. Afterwards I helped my father to get the rhubarb and cauliflowers out. Then I went out to get some orders ; when I got them I took them to the people, and then when I came back I went and got some more orders. About one o'clock I had some fish and potatoes for my dinner, and about two o'clock we sold out. Then I went home and I had a wash, and then I went back to market about three o'clock to get some winkles for Sunday at Billingsgate market. When we got the winkles we went back to Boro market to see if we could buy any more rhubarb or cauliflowers, but we could not. So we came home, and when we got home I helped my father to get the winkles in. When we got them in I went and got some salt, and when I came back I unharnessed the donkey and put it in the stable. Afterwards I took the donkey-barrow home ; when I came back I went and got some corn for the donkey, and I gave

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him some water and put his bed down. Afterwards I had my tea and went and lay down till about seven o'clock, and then I had some supper and went to bed."

When these various facts are pieced together it will be found that the family recreation and work, characteristic of this type, play no inconsiderable part in the life of the boy. If the narrowness and confinement of the house be taken into account, it is surprising to discover the number of interests which are connected with the dwelling-place. They testify to the strength of the domestic instinct, innate in the human race—an instinct that strives to weave out of the most sorry material a fabric of memories and associations, simple and unpretentious in design, and yet not altogether unworthy of the name of home.

The boys of the third type are distinguished by finding indoors or in the garden the possibility of richer and more varied interests. As already mentioned, increased accommodation goes side by side with a more vigorous and a richer kind of home life. The boys do not play about the streets, and out of school time, if not in the house, go for long walks to parks, museums, or picture galleries. In the evenings, certainly during the winter, the boys are usually indoors, where, as a rule, there is no lack of amusements. Games, in which the family joins, are numerous ; among the most popular are ludo, draughts, parlour cricket, dominoes, snakes and



ladders, and cards. Hobbies are frequent ; photography, picture albums, collections of coins or stamps, and magic-lantern exhibitions, all are popular. Occupations, such as the piano, the mandolin, the violin, carpentry, fret-work, and making rag dolls, have their place in the boys' own accounts of how they spend their leisure. Home-lessons and reading are nearly always mentioned. During the day the care of the garden and the numerous pets, including dogs, rabbits, goldfish, fowls, and pigeons, serve to draw the boys back to their homes. A few extracts from some of the papers may be of interest.

"I amused myself by watering the gardens and propping up the plants." "I go into our back garden and play with my boats, which are in a large bath containing water." "When my brother comes home from work I help and watch him tone and fix the plates of his camera." "I stay indoors and play at draughts either with my father or my sister." "I cut out a rude little wooden boat and swim it in a tub of water to amuse the baby." "Early in the morning I get up and give my goldfish some fresh water, and put them in a tub of water, and amuse myself by catching them in the net and letting them go again." "In winter evenings we sometimes sit round the fire and tell each other fairy tales."

It is impossible to read the papers written by these boys and compare them with those of the other types without being struck with the immense difference. A

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changed atmosphere seems to pervade the family; the home life is full of pleasing pictures—a scene of mirth and merriment and happy comradeship. Here, for the first time, some mention is made of sisters, creatures who are hardly ever alluded to by boys of the other types.

The domestic work does not rest very heavy on the boys. A few errands on week-days, a little assistance on working days, and a certain amount of cleaning and polishing on Saturdays seem to include all the calls that are made on their time. The part played in the last type by these tasks is now filled by the happier games of childhood; and the home life gains enormously by the change.

### V

#### THE BOY'S RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

A boy's nature is shaped more by example than by precept. The tone of the family life, the attitude assumed by the different members towards each other, and, in particular, the character of the parents, leave a deeper and more permanent impress on his disposition than is left by any definite moral instruction he may receive. If the father and mother are thriftless, idle, or dishonest, their conduct sets on the children the sign-mark of its influence; and like tends to beget like. In the

case of a drunken father the result is often very different. The boy sees clearly the disastrous effect of this vice; its consequences are so bitterly felt by himself that he is apt to acquire a loathing for strong drink. More than this, the urgency of the evil and the call for strenuous effort to mitigate the suffering of the family, so far from exerting a paralysing influence upon him, seem to have power to stimulate and awaken that capacity for heroism which most men perhaps possess, though few have the opportunity of proving its existence. The boy stands as the protector of the mother and younger children against the father; and his energy and courage go far to invest the shabby trappings of the degraded home with the lustre of self-sacrifice and dauntless endeavour. When, however, the mother is a drunkard, it is rare for the family to escape moral degeneration; and the home life usually suffers utter and irretrievable wreckage.

Another fact, which holds true for all the types, is the kind treatment of children. To the best of their knowledge, the parents use their children well. Occasionally in the first type, but very rarely in the second and third, instances of active and intentional cruelty may be discovered; but they are quite exceptional, and, so far from being condoned by public opinion, rouse the greatest indignation. This is but an instance of the general habit of kindness to the weak and the suffering, which prevails almost universally among the working-

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class population of London. The willingness of the boys to make friends with any stranger is due to the tacit assumption on their part that the unknown portion of the world resembles the fraction with which they are familiar, and, like it, may be regarded as a place of genial good-fellowship.

In other respects, however, the relation of the boy to the members of the family varies greatly as we pass from type to type. In the first type an immense amount of careless indifference and negligence is habitual, and much suffering falls on the children. But it would not be true to say that the cruelty is intentional; any such charge the parents indignantly repudiate, and are usually justified in so doing.

The father counts for little in the home life, seldom interferes in family matters, and little or no evidence is forthcoming to prove that any strong ties of affection exist between him and the boys.

In the case of the mother this is not true. The relation of mother to boy may perhaps best be described as one of ferocious affection. At one moment she overwhelms him with a tearful storm of violent caresses, at another she crushes him beneath a tornado of mingled blows and curses. In all probability this feeling on her part has its origin in the sentiment of property or ownership. The boy is her own, to be dealt with as she pleases. Any ill-usage, or even salutary punishment, if inflicted by others, awakens a passionate outburst of wrath. She

does not possess much of this world's goods, but what little she has she means to hold fast, and no external interference is allowed. This singular type of affection has no deep roots; she loudly laments an untimely death, but, having paid it the due tribute of tears, crape, and carriages, will banish its remembrance to the shadow-land of the forgotten past. There are many children, and if one is lost plenty remain to fill the house. After the age of seven she has no control over the boy. He does what he pleases, shaping his course to suit his own will. He displays no affection for her; respect and obedience are virtues he does not recognise; while her immediate presence and the fear of her strong arm alone count for anything in his estimation of home influences.

Between brothers and sisters the relations are loose and insignificant. The street rather than the house is the scene of all activities, and there, brothers and sisters count for no more than the thousand other boys and girls who are sown broadcast over the pavement.

In the second type there is less neglect on the part of the parents; but an extensive ignorance, coupled with quaint fragments of superstition, touching the right method of bringing up children, leads to much needless pain.

The father does not play any very active part in domestic matters, and leaves the care of the home and children to his wife, handing over to her the greater part of his weekly earnings. Occasionally, when the boy's conduct

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becomes intolerable, he steps in and exerts a salutary influence. But his interference is of an intermittent kind, very effective while it lasts, but leaving little permanent trace. The general relation between son and father is one of mutual tolerance rather than active affection.

The mother is undoubtedly very fond and proud of her boys. Her affection has its origin not so much in the pride of possession as in that feeling which gathers round any object for which one has laboured long and suffered much. The strongest ties unite her to the little boy, to whom she is everything; but, as years pass, and he grows less dependent on her and more difficult to control, the bond slackens, and never again becomes very strong. Her love continues, but is often mingled with a sense of irritation at her failure to keep the upper hand. Her attitude towards him may perhaps be defined as one of affection, modified by a feeling of conscious incompetence. The relations of the boy to his mother undergo a corresponding transformation. Up to the age of ten he is devotedly attached to her, then, by degrees, as his need of her becomes less urgent, this feeling is replaced by one of kindly and genial patronage, touched with contempt;—a feeling which vigorously resents any interference of a woman in his affairs. Exceptions to this rule are frequent, and generally found where some special call is made on the boy to fight for the maintenance of the home, as, for example, when the father takes to drink or the mother is left a widow.

Then, as though dragged out from some hidden reservoir of feeling, chains of strong affection bind mother and son together, and continue unbroken while life lasts.

The relation of the boy to his brothers and sisters, after infancy is past, varies much with the respective ages of the two. When but slight difference of years is found, little affection is shown. Brothers appear too much in the light of rival claimants on the small store of amusements the home contains to permit of the development of any very tender feelings. Sisters live in a different world, attend a different department at the day school, and make friends, there and in the street, with other girls, and rarely associate with their brothers. This segregation of the sexes does not lend itself to the establishment of any very strong ties. It will be interesting to watch whether the increase of "mixed schools" is able to change this relation of brother to sister. The elder boy treats the younger with a kindly patronage, and, when away from home, looks after him most carefully, while the younger regards the elder as an object of boundless admiration, and to the best of his power strives to imitate him. The same phenomenon, though much more intensely displayed, is seen in the attitude of elder sisters to little brothers. The girl has a sort of instinctive affection for anything small or weak, like kittens and babies, who can be cuddled and will respond to caresses. She is often more than a mother to the boy so long as he needs her care. She washes and

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dresses him, puts him to bed at night, and sometimes teaches him to say his prayers. But with growing years comes a growing rift, and the two gradually drift apart.

In the third type family relations attain a more satisfactory and stable basis. The ties of affection are deep and strong; the loss of a child, at any rate to the mother, is a loss which is burned into the memory and not easily effaced by lapse of time. The boys are controlled better, though as a rule it is only the father who can manage them. As with the other types, the children contrive to keep the upper hand, and manage, if not by active obstruction, at any rate by judicious persecution and persistence, eventually to obtain their own way.

The development of home interests throws brother and sister more together, and tends to promote a store of happier and more lasting feelings between the two.

### VI

#### MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS OF HOME LIFE

Nothing has so far been said of paid work which the boys undertake while still at school. With the general discussion of this subject I am not concerned, but only with such part of it as immediately affects the home. In the first type the boys perform a considerable number of miscellaneous tasks on Saturdays, but their



employment is intermittent in character and possesses those elements of caprice and irregularity which distinguish all the doings of this class of people. The mother usually incites the boy to find a job, and gets from him as large a proportion of his earnings as threats can extract.

In the second type the amount of paid work undertaken by the schoolboy reaches a maximum, often absorbing the whole of his leisure time, rousing him long before dawn, and keeping him busy till the night is far spent. Under conditions such as these the family life of the boy drops to a vanishing quantity, and home is to him but a place where he can snatch a few brief and broken intervals of repose. But occasionally other conditions compensate for this enforced absence from the house. When the boy is conscious that his small earnings are one of the main supports of the family, he regards the home as in part his own creation, sees in it the work of his own hands, and feels for it a corresponding pride and affection. In nearly every instance the work is undertaken at the suggestion or under the compulsion of the parents, and it is they who receive the whole of the wages, occasionally returning to him a sixpence to spend on himself. The majority of the boys from twelve years old and upward are in the habit of undertaking some form of paid work.

In the third type the hours of labour are briefer and the numbers employed smaller, but a considerable proportion

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of the boys—at least a third—during their last year or two of school will earn a few shillings a week. In some instances this is done to get a little pocket-money; but more often the cause lies in the insistence of the parents, who find their own wages all too little to keep up the standard of life their social position demands.

In the foregoing picture of family life, while much applies to the elder boy, I have more particularly had in view the boy while he is still at school. I have done this because, from the point of view of the home, this is the all-important period. When schooldays are over the boy is necessarily much away from the house, and the opportunity for developing any strong love of home has gone for ever. If during the early years the home life has been strong and healthy, it will usually preserve its vigour when the school is left; while if the home ties have been flimsy and unsubstantial, they will rapidly loosen and disappear when the boy goes out to work. His habits are now formed; and if home figures largely among these habits, all the accumulated strength of the past is exerted in favour of preservation of family sentiment. The time of leaving school is undoubtedly a critical epoch in the boy's career. The possession of regular earnings, the sense of newly gained freedom, the influence of comrades, and the approach of manhood all tend to shake the habits of days gone by. The prospect of most forms of amusement, clubs, music-halls, and the like, now for the first time thrown open

to him, offer counter-attraction to the comparative dullness of the family circle. Finally, the long hours of work, with their note of reiterated monotony, breed in the lad, by way of reaction, a ceaseless craving for excitement, not easily satisfied within the narrow walls of the dwelling. All these forces, taken together, constitute a serious menace to the prosperity of the home. Whether they prevail or not depends on the earlier history of the boy.

In the case of the first type, home life has never existed, and no special change is visible when the boy leaves school. He chooses his own form of remunerative loafing, probably continues to sleep at home, and pays his mother intermittently a few shillings for his keep. He is rarely in the house, and sleeps there only because he finds it the cheapest form of lodging. He is conscious of no ties attaching him to the family, and requires but the slightest inducement to shift his abode to some other more favourable spot. Often this change is not made until marriage; but under no circumstances is the family life of any appreciable value.

With the second type the home life hangs long in the balance, the index swinging now to one side and now to the other. Even when conditions are most propitious it never assumes very large proportions. The boy has been accustomed to look for the greater part of his amusements in the street, and the habit naturally continues. It is, however, true that, in the majority

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of cases, home does count for something in his estimation of this world's goods, and is not forsaken without substantial reasons. He leaves school on the earliest possible occasion, often evading the law for several months, and usually selects his own form of employment. This, while well paid at the outset, offers no prospects of advance, and leads inevitably to the dreary morass of unskilled labour. His parents are quite indifferent to the nature of the work so long as the pay is satisfactory. They are not prepared to forego earnings for a time in order that the boy may learn a trade. The immediate present looms large and ominous, hiding the shadowy form of the uncertain future. The wages are handed over to the mother, who returns him sixpence or a shilling for himself and continues to feed and clothe him. Frequently when he gets a rise he conceals the fact, and so augments his store of pocket-money. As he grows older and reaches maturity, he retains a larger proportion of his wages and rarely gives more than ten shillings a week. Out of this sum his mother lodges and feeds him, while he purchases his own clothes. He does not consider it his duty to do more than pay for his keep. The relations of the boy to his mother have now completely changed. He is no longer dependent on her, and has grown entirely self-supporting. The mother exerts herself to please him, having always before her eyes the recurrent menace of his leaving home. Under ordinary circumstances he lives with the family till

marriage, appearing as often—it would be truer to say as seldom—as the father. Not infrequently domestic quarrels and the discomfort of the dwelling drive him away to other lodgings. But even then he frequently visits the family, and testifies by occasional gifts of money to the mother and presents to smaller brothers and sisters that the sentiment of home has not wholly deserted him.

With the third type comes a general and sustained improvement in the life of the family. The lad has been used to regard the home as the centre of his activities, has learned to find there many forms of recreation, and, when work is over, from force of habit returns to the house. His relations have naturally widened, and other interests begun to develop, but the home still retains much of its earlier power, and the family circle draws him back into its midst. He leaves school at the earliest legal age, and his father usually secures him a place in his own workshop or some corresponding skilled trade. It is rare for the father to permit him to prolong his stay at school. The father would not like to see his son sink in the social scale, but does not feel called on to make any sacrifice to enable the boy to rise higher.

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### VII

#### THE HOME FROM THE BOY'S POINT OF VIEW

In what light does the boy himself regard his home? To some extent this question has been already answered. But the answer lies strewn over many pages and intermingled with other matter which, while it bears closely on the welfare of the family and so affects the boy, does not play any part in his own estimation of the home. It is not, therefore, wasted labour, even though some repetition be involved, to gather up the scattered threads and attempt the difficult task of weaving them into a picture representing the home as it appears in the eyes of the boy.

To the boy of the first type the world and all its glories signify merely that fragment of the town with which his roamings have rendered him familiar. It is a place filled to the brim with novel surprises and objects of alluring interest; where prizes are won by the wary and rough blows fall on the foolish; where the unexpected is always prominent, and where the most uniform law discoverable is the absence of all uniformity. To face the new, to grasp its significance, and to lay hold adroitly and rapidly on the chance offerings of the flitting moment, these are the chief difficulties and the chief excitements of his life. In

the midst of this fascinating universe a single spot stands out in striking contrast with the rest. It lies hid deep within the heart of those dingy obstructing masses of brickwork that everywhere limit his playground. It is wrapped in a mantle of gloom and oppressive confinement, through whose folds penetrates no single spark of the glamour and brightness of the streets. Sharp wits have here no scope afforded them to reap rich harvests; within its boundaries the sense of irresponsible freedom falls away and disappears. Baffling obstacles hedge in his will; in the event of sudden danger escape is difficult, and heavy hands are deft at discovering the tenderest regions of the human frame. The feeling of restraint is not due to any code of rigid rules imposed upon him; this might be judiciously evaded. But the element of the unexpected here reaches a maximum, and the forms it assumes are so singularly unpleasant, and leave so little room for inventive genius, that he shrinks from any very close contact with this thorny bundle of incalculable contingencies.

Of the sundry creatures he is accustomed to meet there, none inspire any strong emotions. Those of his own age continually run counter to his wishes, make vigorous and successful claim to the few objects of desire the house possesses, and are more irritating, because less easily shaken off, than his playmates in the street. Those younger than himself are an endless source of vexation; they are foolish, helpless things,

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unable to look after themselves, need perpetual minding—a task he loathes—worry him with their querulous noises, and at times, when neglected, bring down on him a storm of blows and curses. Yet withal he has a strange, inexplicable liking for these whining objects, can never bring himself to inflict on them the punishment their crimes deserve, and against ill-usage at the hands of others stands as their staunchest champion. Of the elder members, with the exception of his mother, he sees little, and would gladly see less. But of the mother, who is always present, he has a holy dread. She is to him the incarnation of the incalculable and the embodiment of autocratic power; before her he is seized with a spasm of helpless impotence, and shrivels, at her word, into gibbering subservience. Yet admiration tempers fear. To witness her assault on a neighbour, who has ventured to interfere with him, is an experience for ever stamped on his memory; while to hear her monologue with the school teacher, who has made his hands tingle, rouses a sense of vivid pride in the possession of so dauntless a protector.

But in spite of all drawbacks, the tenement can boast certain compensating advantages. Against the cold of night and the freezing onslaught of the winter wind it offers security and a place of drowsy and delectable warmth. Food, too, of a kind less piquant, indeed, than the gathered spoils of the street, but more regular in supply, is stored within. Other lodgings he visits



occasionally for the sake of change, or when the tropical season of domestic broils drives him without. But habit is strong, and when the dust of sleep is heavy on his eyes, he tends to return to the same dwelling. Of strong ties of affection he knows little; and home is to him but a convenient boarding-house, and its inhabitants tolerable fellow-lodgers, with whose ways time has made him well familiar.

The boy of the second type looks out upon a world distinguished by no external feature from the world of the first type of boy. The surroundings are similar, but the subjective colouring, due to the boy's point of view, is transformed. The touch of romance, present before, is now gone, and the element of adventure and fantastic uncertainty is no longer manifest. Treasures of high desire are dangled before his eyes, but his habits of a rude morality, forbidding him to grasp any unprotected object, put them for ever just beyond his reach. Yet the street remains a thing of joy and resistless fascination, hung with a thousand sparkling lights, and offering to all alike unfettered freedom and a never-failing round of thrilling amusement. The house again stands out in vivid contrast as a place of hidden darkness, the abode of things that cramp and shackle active movement, and the haunt of an insistent monotony. But here the likeness ends and new phenomena make their appearance. A glimmer of rules and ordered conduct trails across the scene. The domestic work, the running

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of errands, and, of an evening, reading, and perhaps a game, and here and there a birthday-party, lend a charm and power of attraction to the home not seen before. Its packed contents, redolent with the fragrance of days gone by, are subjects of some pride and fond memories. As for the inmates, they too are differently regarded, and rise higher in the boy's scale of this world's goods.

Those of the boy's own age and sex still remain clamorous rivals, while the girls are seldom seen and little noticed. The younger are too often a clogging hindrance to free indulgence in the joys outside. The baby and the perambulator inspire only a very modified feeling of delight, while the small child, with its fatal habit of exploring the wheels of moving vehicles, demands too large a share of his attention to make a welcome comrade. Yet these tiny creatures possess uncanny powers. Soft, chubby arms have a not unpleasing habit of twining round his neck, and are not willingly repulsed; and grimy fingers ruthlessly tugging at his hair and scoring dark smears upon his cheek leave marks deeper and more lasting than those visible to the eye.

The father is seen seldom, but when seen is a welcome guest. He is a kindly disposed man, given to providing unexpected treats and sundry pennies if properly approached. The mother he loves devotedly as a small child, but with lapse of years an element

of kindly contempt mingles with this feeling. Her persistent attempts to thwart his will are irritating, and, from a woman, not to be borne with equanimity. But at the bottom of his heart the old affection is not dead, and if sudden call be made upon it, the call rarely fails to awake an echo of response.

So the house and its contents, while unable to compete with the glamour of the streets, are not wholly without their influence on the course of the boy's life. There come hours when the street is cold and cheerless, when the ways of the world are puzzling and unpleasing, when companions are rough and cruel, and the boy feels himself alone and helpless in the midst of a countless host that pays him no regard. At such times the genial glow of a fire, the simple order and familiar habits of the house, and the thought of that tiny world peopled with kindly folk, ready to bid him welcome, call him in, as to a place of refuge. A place of refuge; this, perhaps, better than any other term, describes the boy's view of his home.

When the third type of boy is observed a further movement, making in the same direction, will be found to have occurred. In their order of respective merits, as estimated by the boys, the world and the dwelling have changed places. The street begins to lose its power of fascination; its rough ways, its noise, and its rude pleasures jar on his nerves as things not befitting the class of which he is a member. The house has

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expanded and grown bright, while the sense of oppression and confinement has disappeared. Order and regularity have become habitual, and he has grown to their ways and learned to appreciate their value. The members of the family meet often, and the ties uniting him to them have grown strong. And so in some strange wise it comes to pass that the pride in the dwellings and its contents, the thought of the gentle flow of uneventful life, the memory of evenings by the fireside with their games, their songs, and their merriment, and the love of old familiar faces, all weave themselves into that wondrous web of sentiment which grows not old and clings the tighter as years roll by, and which, when they feel it, men call the sentiment of home.

### VIII

#### THE TOWN AND THE FAMILY

The sketch of family life, or rather that part of family life which concerns the boy, is in its broad outlines now complete. An answer, spread over many pages, has been given to the question what in family life can be preserved and what destroyed. Family life has been shown to be a complex of many elements. Each element has, so far as possible, been isolated and its present value, as a factor of the home, appraised. It is these elements that admit of preservation or destruction. A

change in any one, whether for the better or the worse, is followed by a change in the life of the family. The Social Reformer, in considering the consequence of any proposed measure, must ask himself what effect it is likely to have on any or all these elements. The issue will then be narrowed down and confined within definite limits : instead of speaking amiably but unintelligently of "home" and "family," or lapsing into inane platitudes or frothy rhetoric, he can once for all bring the matter to a crucial test. Into this thorny region of controversy I do not propose to enter. But one question I will discuss, partly as an example of applying this method, and partly because it touches closely the subject of this essay.

What, if any, value have boys' clubs? Their original object was to attract the boy to the club buildings, to keep him employed there with games and other forms of amusement, to bring him into friendly contact with men of education and refinement, and so to improve his moral condition. If, as is desired, the boy becomes a regular attendant, certain results must follow. The clubs being open every evening, will keep the boy from spending his evenings at home ; next, by providing sundry kinds of recreation, they teach him to look for his pleasures there, and so thrust the centre of his activities outside the home ; finally, the brightness of the rooms, their airy space, and their superior decoration, all serve to throw his own dwelling into unfavourable con-

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trast. The elements of the common dwelling and the recreations of the home are therefore threatened, and no possible moral improvement can compensate for this destruction. Should we therefore condemn clubs? The answer varies with the type of boy.

In the case of the first type no element is threatened with destruction, because the element is a non-existent factor in the boy's life. He does not change the home for the club, but frequents the club instead of the streets. With the second type the answer is different. It has been shown how the boy's home life, as he quits school, hangs in the balance, while the struggle continues between the attraction of the home and the street. Clubs throw their weight into the outside factor, and must often turn the scale. There is some slight glimmer of home life, and this glimmer the clubs effectually extinguish.

In the third type the home life is strong. Its chief elements are the pride in the dwelling and the recreation of the evenings. These the club kills, and the loss is irreparable.

Now, clubs were originally started for boys of the first type, and entirely merited the eulogy they received. A few have still preserved their old character; and the work, often disheartening in its result, deserves unqualified commendation, while the labour and self-sacrifice of the organisers are beyond all praise. But with the vast majority a change has gradually taken place. There has

been a tendency to throw out the unruly element of the first and replace it by boys drawn from the second type; nor has the process of transformation stayed here. With increased order, members of the third type have appeared and, in their turn, slowly ejected the second, till at the present time the clubs are mainly filled with boys of the highest social class. The boy, who would otherwise be at home, is now in the club. Such a state of affairs cannot be regarded with equanimity. If clubs desire to meet with continued approval, they must return to their old ideal of restricting their energies to boys of the first type and perhaps a few of the rougher representatives of the second. If they go further (and the temptation to do so is strong, for the results are much more pleasing in appearance), they are passing beyond their duties, and constitute a serious menace to family life.

One final question demands an answer. How does family life now compare with family life in the past—is its strength waxing or is it waning? The material for the answer, which admits of no manner of doubt, has already been laid before the reader. The attractive excitement that permeates the atmosphere of a town, the contrasting confinement and closeness of the house, the spread of Block-dwellings and the demolition of cottages, and, finally, the broadening distance that separates workshops and home—all forces increasing in magnitude—threaten the very existence of family life among the members of the second type. Nor have families of the

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third type entirely escaped this baneful influence: similar evils are at work; and over and above these comes the plague of the prolific villa, crushing out the individuality of the home, and setting up, as the sole ideal of the universe, the bay windows, the lace curtains, and the unpliant palm. Every element of the home must battle for bare existence, and emerges from the combat marred and crippled. And yearly, hourly, the stress of the struggle waxes keener, as, sweeping out into the countryside, throttling the weak and paralysing the strength of the strong, extend in wider and widening circles the thousand arms of the mighty city.



# THE BOY AND HIS WORK

By J. G. CLOETE

## I

### THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF BOY LABOUR

ONE need have no fear of being accused of exaggeration in describing the boy worker in London as ubiquitous. As page-boy in the house of the rich, or as errand-boy for the humblest East End shopkeeper, he is equally indispensable; he is numbered among the staff of every office, he does his share of the work of every factory that exists. There are many occupations, such as that of telegraph messenger, which are his, and his alone. He is paid for handing coffee and cigars to the club *habitué* of Pall Mall; he is paid for handing rivets to the boilermaker in the docks. In short, he is to be found everywhere.

This almost universal demand for boy labour in London is of comparatively recent growth. The London boy of fifty years ago was by no means qualified to fill the many different places that he occupies to-day. His working capacity has increased. Compulsory education, the gradual improvement of his home surroundings, evening continuation schools, and the various forms of

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clubs that have been formed for him have all in greater or less degree done their share in bringing this about. The result is that at the present time the boy as a worker is in great demand, and the question of boy labour has become one of the important social problems of the day.

In spite of its importance it is a problem to which hitherto but little attention has been paid. Neither the sociologist nor the economist has considered it a problem worthy of serious study. The employer, if he considers the matter at all, does so from a biased standpoint. The teacher's interest in the boy after he leaves school is usually confined to giving a formal reference as to character. But by far the worst culprits are the people most closely concerned, the parents and the boys themselves. In their eyes the immediate present with all its bustle and anxiety looms so large that the prospects of the more remote future are altogether lost to view. The ease with which situations can be secured at the age of fourteen blinds them to the infinitely greater ease with which they can be lost from the age of seventeen onwards.

That this general neglect of the whole question is the cause of a great deal of harm no one will deny. With a little more care devoted to the choice of work at the critical age of fourteen, many of the present unemployed ne'er-do-weels who abound in London might have been made into self-respecting citizens, doing good work and

earning good wages. The difficulty is to know how to arouse sufficient interest in the question to ensure this extra care being taken.

To expect more from the employer seems hopeless. It is only natural that he should confine himself to the business point of view, and continue to draw large quantities of labour from the cheapest market without troubling himself as to the future of those who provide that labour. Moreover, the introduction of machinery has made it impossible for many employers not to take this view. To keep up with the times the manufacturer must use machinery, and if he finds that a boy and a machine can do the same amount of work that would formerly occupy several men, as a matter of course he will give the work to the boys, turning them off as soon as they become men and expect the wages of a man, and filling their places with others fresh from school.

For the teacher it can be fairly argued that the future welfare of his pupils is no concern of his, and that his responsibility ceases the moment the boy leaves school. Teachers are occasionally to be found, especially among the assistants, who are willing to turn to good account the knowledge they have gained of the character and special aptitudes of the boy, by suggesting to him the sort of work for which he is best suited, and, when possible, helping him to secure it. The value of such help can hardly be overestimated. It is greatly to be regretted that there is not more of it given, for the

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teacher whose opinion carries weight with the boys is one of the very few people whose advice the boy is likely to follow. A less desirable type is the headmaster whose hobby it is to "create a market," so to speak, for his boys. A man like this will lay himself out to receive applications from employers, and will tell you with pride that he has places booked for the next twenty or thirty boys to leave. In a case like this, as in all cases where numbers are aimed at, discrimination is apt to go to the wall, and the boys, who are only too willing to follow like sheep a lead that is given them, often find themselves dumped into quite unsuitable situations within a few days of their leaving school.

The views of the parents as to the best opening for their children are usually somewhat distorted ones. With them the application of the old proverb of a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush amounts to a positive vice. It is the exception rather than the rule to meet with parents who are willing to put their sons to a good trade and accept the lower wages that anything in the nature of an apprenticeship would involve. It is the elder children who suffer most from this, for the struggle for existence is always keenest whilst all the children are still at school. There may be as many as eight or ten young ones at home all increasing the household expenditure without adding to its income. The mother of such a family, who has been forced for some years to think anxiously how far each halfpenny

can be made to go, is naturally prone to exaggerate the importance of the extra shilling that is paid in many cases for work that tends to lead to nothing afterwards. And the mother, in her capacity as family treasurer, sees that her opinion carries weight. Thus it is no uncommon occurrence for the younger sons to be given a better start in life than the elder, since the family grows more and more prosperous as the proportion of wage-earners to school-children increases; and so, by the time there are two or three of the elder boys at work, the family can afford to accept lower wages for the younger ones and put them to a better trade.

There is one other point worth mentioning in connection with the parents' point of view. Leaving out of consideration for the moment the more prosperous of the working-class families, the home life is rarely sufficiently attractive to keep the sons of the family at home much after the age of nineteen or twenty. It seems almost as if the instinctive knowledge of this fact influences the minds of the parents, and gives rise to a vague sort of feeling which they themselves would be the first to repudiate, that they are responsible for their children only until that age. In some cases, at any rate, the result of this is that the parents regard it as a matter of course that they should make as much as possible out of their children while they are still at home, and shut their eyes to the years to come.

What, then, of the boy's attitude? To blame him

for not exercising more care in his choice of work seems like blaming the heathen for being a heathen before he has had a chance of becoming anything else. It may be that boys are too young when they leave school to realise the importance of choosing a suitable career. If so, the recent raising of the school age from thirteen to fourteen was distinctly a step in the right direction towards remedying this defect. Still, it was not more than a step, and there are many men with a wide experience of boy life who think that the principle ought to be carried still further in the form of compulsory evening schools after the age of fourteen. Desirable as this would be, it is hardly likely that the general public will be brought to see the necessity for it for many years to come.

Other critics say that boys are turned out of the London Board Schools with the same deadly uniformity as sausages from a sausage machine, and that no opportunity is given for anything in the way of individuality to assert itself. An easy charge to make, but not one to be taken too seriously. Where such large numbers are being dealt with there must be a certain amount of uniformity. A similar charge is brought in the same light-hearted way against our Public School system, with its much larger proportion of masters to boys, consisting of men, too, who have had a more liberal education than the ordinary Board School teacher. A boy's individual peculiarities and characteristics are not

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always obvious to the casual observer, but it would take a good deal more than a few years of any school system in the world to entirely eradicate them.

Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the boy's own ideas as to how he is to earn his living are usually, to say the least of it, hazy. Ask any group of school-boys what they are going to do when they leave school. Very few will be ready with a definite practical answer. A certain number will answer glibly enough, but their answer will be couched in the vaguest of terms. They will tell you, for instance, that they are going to be engineers, but further inquiry will altogether fail to reveal what steps they propose to take in order to become engineers, or to which of the many branches of engineering they intend to devote themselves. The great majority, however, will not even have reached this vague state of mind. They will tell you frankly that they do not know. Often they do not seem to care. A surprisingly small proportion will be found who look forward to following as a matter of course in their father's footsteps. Family tradition, owing to the early breaking up of the home, the continual shifting from place to place, and other causes, does not exist to anything like the same extent as it does in other classes of life. Moreover, a curious restlessness, consisting partly of ambition and partly of discontent, often induces the boy to strive after something which he considers more "respectable" than his father's calling.

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In some districts there will be a larger proportion of boys who know what they are going to do, owing to special circumstances connected with the locality of the school. The schools of a district like St. Luke's, for example, would contain many future office-boys and junior clerks, near as it is to the centre of office life in the City; railway work of various sorts would attract many of the boys from Stratford; the ranks of lightermen, boilermakers, and other riverside workers are recruited chiefly from the schools of districts like Wapping and Limehouse; a fair percentage of boys at school near some large factory, such as the indiarubber works at Silvertown, will look upon that factory as the natural means of providing them with a livelihood.

Apart from these special cases, the indifference of the boys on the subject is widespread. When the time to decide does arrive their attitude is no less casual, and is further complicated by ideas which it would be kindness to describe as crude. It is ludicrous to expect anything in the nature of an intelligent state of mind from a type of boy such as I once knew in Spitalfields. In wet weather and in fine he used to spend his days and evenings selling matches outside a men's lavatory in Shoreditch. The reason that he gave for not doing regular work was that he would not get paid until the Saturday, and so would have to go a whole week without any money to spend for food!



Of course, the above is rather an extreme instance, but even in more normal cases the attitude of the boy, if not so distorted, is nevertheless a very narrow one. The London horizon is so large that its younger members make no effort to investigate more than their own immediate neighbourhood. Inconceivable as it may appear at first sight, there are hundreds of boys in London who have only once or twice in their lives been more than a mile or two away from their own homes. To the average boy in Bethnal Green, Hyde Park or Kew Gardens are as much an unknown land as the grouse moors of Scotland.

Thus a boy, on leaving school, will often go out to look for work with no fixed idea in his head, and simply drift into the first opening he comes across without the slightest effort at discrimination. Frequently the only reason that drives him further afield is the fact that there is no work to be had in the street in which he lives. A "job" in the broadest sense of the word is what he sets out to find; of what kind it is, is to him a matter of secondary importance. The inevitable result follows. After a short time many an employer finds that the boy is not suited to the work, and many and many a boy discovers that the work he has taken up is entirely unsuited to him. One might have thought that such a discovery on the part of the boy would have been the death-blow of his casual frame of mind. As a matter of fact, it does no more than

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give it a slight and temporary shock. The boy simply leaves and drifts into something else in the same haphazard way. I have known boys who, within three years of leaving school, have been employed in as many as seventeen different situations, comprising some half-dozen totally different occupations, with the result that at the age of sixteen or seventeen they are mere wastrels in the labour market, with no special training and no special capacity; even with characters undermined by the aimless nature of their previous three years' existence with its constant changes.

That it is possible for boys at the outset of their career thus to drift in and out of employment without being out of work for more than perhaps a few days at a time is due to the large demand there is in the labour market for boys from the age of fourteen to sixteen. A business man who advertises for a clerk is deluged with hundreds of applications for the post, whereas a similar advertisement for an office-boy would very likely meet with no response at all. Moreover, this demand has for some years been steadily increasing, and employers of all kinds complain that it is much more difficult to secure boys now than it was twenty or even ten years ago.

An interesting proof of this increase is to be found in the history of the shoeblacking industry in London. Struck by the large number of boys that were to be seen loafing about the streets with no regular occupation

some fifty odd years ago, a few of the patrons of the Ragged School Union conceived the idea of establishing them in homes and sending them out as shoeblacks. The original idea was to provide work for boys during the great Exhibition of 1851. The experiment, however, proved so successful that its fruits remained after the Exhibition was over in the form of a regular new industry. For many years large numbers of boys earned their livelihood in this way, and the various shoeblack brigades in London did a very useful work. A quarter of a century ago an average of close on two thousand boys passed yearly through the nine different homes, and the earnings of the boys amounted to over £12,000 a year. Of these nine homes, only two are now in existence: one, situated at Saffron Hill, whose inmates are known as the Central Reds, supplying the needs of the City; the other, in Leman Street, known as the East London Blues, has ceased to cater for boys at all, and confines its attention to men who are either epileptic or deformed. As boys found it easier and easier to get other kinds of work, the various shoeblack homes became gradually more and more deserted, till one by one they were forced to close their doors for lack of inmates.

The causes which have led to an increased working capacity on the part of the boy, and have thereby created a much larger demand for his services, have already been hinted at. It will probably be worth our

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while to examine the results of this increase in more detail.

The most obvious result is one which follows naturally from the elementary law of supply and demand. Following this law, the price of boy labour has advanced appreciably within the last few years. Eight shillings a week is now almost as common a figure for an office-boy to start on as five was not long ago, and many large employers of boys have had to recast their whole scale of wages. As an instance of this the District Messenger Company may be quoted as perhaps the most familiar example. It is not an easy matter to give a reliable opinion on the matter, but there are indications at the present time which tend to show that this increase in value and in demand has just about reached the high-water mark, and that a reaction may be expected shortly. One of the most significant signs is the way in which girls are beginning to take up work that was formerly done by boys. Managers of jam factories, match factories, and many other large works have discovered that girls are both better and cheaper workers than boys. Moreover, girls are securing a footing which may be a lasting one in occupations which they had not dreamt of entering a few years ago. Reuter's Telegraph Agency in the City, instead of employing boys exclusively, now divides the work between eighty boys and forty girls. It was intended only as an experiment, but the results are said to be quite satisfactory, and it

seems reasonable to expect a further advance in this direction before long.

If girls should succeed in supplanting boys as messengers to any appreciable extent, there can be little doubt that it would be a good thing for the boys in the long run. As messengers they are learning nothing useful beyond a certain amount of discipline, and the work itself to the boy mind is apt to be deceptive. It holds out an alluring prospect of easy and regular work, of good wages and good clothes, but the boy finds out too late that it leaves him empty-handed at the finish. In fact, this introduction of girl labour has been hailed by some as a possible solution of many of the difficulties of the problem relating to boys. Whether or not it is a good thing for the girls is a question that need not be discussed here.

The greater ease with which a boy can now secure work has also had a certain amount of effect on another branch of the subject, to which a good deal of attention has been drawn of late. I refer to the question of apprenticeship. It is a well-known fact, and one that needs no lengthy array of statistics to prove, that apprenticeship has for some time now been steadily going out of favour. There are a limited number of small professions, such as that of lighterman, admittance to whose ranks is so zealously guarded by the powerful trades unions that control them, that a boy practically has to serve a term of apprenticeship before he can enter

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them. In the vast majority of cases, however, the boy who can easily get work without doing so has a strong aversion to binding himself down definitely for a term of four, five, or six years, as the case may be. He feels that it robs him to a certain extent of that sense of independence which he prizes so much. Moreover, he is suspicious of it. New processes, machinery, trade developments of all sorts, may revolutionise a trade before his indentures are half completed. A curious instance of this is happening to my knowledge even now. Two boys are apprenticed to a small trade which consists of a particular form of glass-cutting. The demand for the hand-treated article is now dying out, a chemical process giving almost the same result at a very much cheaper cost; and the boys, with several years of their apprenticeship still to run, are tied down to a trade that will soon be as extinct as the dodo.

Deeper reasons than these are really at the bottom of the decay of apprenticeship. To begin with, huge factories and largely capitalised industrial companies have taken the place of many of the small workshops and skilled mechanics who were their own masters, even if the extent of their business was a small one. In these new conditions the old personal feeling between master and man, which was so potent a factor in the old apprenticeship system, is no longer possible. Instead of the master teaching his pupil every petty detail of the trade as before, we now have a foreman

setting the half-dozen apprentices for whom he is responsible various odd jobs. The personal element has gone.

Then, again, the introduction of machinery, and consequent division and subdivision of labour, have made a long term of apprenticeship unnecessary and useless. There is no longer any need for a man to spend years learning how to make boots, when all that is necessary for him is to learn how to make one small portion of a boot, leaving the other portions to be made by other hands. The same applies to cabinet-making and other trades besides the boot trade.

Attempts have been made within the last two years to infuse new life into the apprenticeship system. How far they will be successful it is too early yet to decide. It seems unlikely that the numbers of apprentices will ever increase much more, though a society that would content itself with apprenticing boys who, owing to some physical deformity or similar reason, otherwise found great difficulty in earning their living would undoubtedly be doing a very valuable work indeed.

Mention of the physically defective compels us to ask ourselves the question, "What chance have the halt, the lame, and the blind of competing with their healthier rivals in the labour market?" Whatever chance they may have is, unfortunately, considerably lessened by the position which their parents usually take up. This time, one has more reluctance than before in blaming the

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mother, since it is not through neglect that she fails in her duty, nor yet through greed, but through mistaken kindness. Many a mother would consider it unwarrantable cruelty, for instance, to let a young child that is blind mix as freely as possible with other children of the same age; a course that would doubtless entail much hardship to the children, but one that would teach them at an age when it is easiest to learn how best to overcome the tremendous handicap with which they are burdened. The mother does not see that the alternative is still more cruel, since it deprives the children of this most valuable opportunity. And so she keeps them as much as possible at home, gladly spending much of her time in attending to their many wants, rather than showing them how to supply those wants themselves. The deaf and dumb child is treated in the same way. Special schools, provided for cases like these, have to spend much time in teaching the children little things that they ought certainly to have learnt at home.

As regards the actual work done by children who are in any way deficient, the sedentary trades are, of course, the only ones open to cripples, and of these, tailoring and bootmaking seem to be favourites. Luckily, not many boy cripples in London are compelled to work for their living. Owing probably to the great difficulty involved in properly attending to them, many of those who are crippled or deformed as babies, or as very young children, die before they come to man's estate, and the



majority of the adult cripples that one sees about are cripples owing to some accident or disease that they have met with later in life.

The blind are chiefly proficient in cane-work and basket-work of all sorts, and the more intelligent can be trained up as very capable piano-tuners. The deaf and dumb seem to preponderate in French-polishing, cabinet-making, and the many branches connected with the furniture trade. Maple's, I believe, have usually a fair number among their staff. Of course, it stands to reason that boys who are afflicted in any of these ways do find it more difficult than their sounder brothers to get work, but, as a matter of fact, it is usually the case that this difficulty is more than overcome by the greater willingness to assist them on the part of teachers and others interested in them.

Before closing this introductory part of the essay, one more point calls for a few remarks. The question of employment bureaux for boys is one that often occurs to managers of clubs and others interested in their welfare. If only a satisfactory method for running such a bureau could be discovered, it would undoubtedly be a very good thing. The chief obstacle, generally, seems to be the difficulty of conducting them on a sufficiently large scale to be of any real use. It is no use expecting a large number of employers to turn to you for boys when you have, at most, one or two at a time wanting employment. The ordinary club manager would not have more

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than this number on his hands at a time, and a great many would not have as many; and it would be a hard matter to find a manager willing to conduct a registry office for boys other than those belonging to his own club. True, it has been done for some years at one place in London, in connection with the Mansfield House Settlement at Canning Town, but the results, though far from being a failure, do not seem to have been sufficiently encouraging to induce others to start similar registry offices in other parts of London. One obvious drawback to a central establishment which throws its doors open in this way to any boy who may care to apply is, that it is chiefly the "undesirables" who come for assistance, and the one essential for dealing with these special cases, namely, personal knowledge of the boy's character and antecedents, will be found wanting. The sort of boy I mean by the undesirable is the boy of sixteen or seventeen who is left stranded on account of his having been only employed in irregular work until that age, or the boy who has been dismissed for incompetency. It would be annoying, to say the least of it, for the manager of a registry office to be continually confronted with boys like this, when he knows that if only they had come to him on leaving school they would probably never have been reduced to the difficult position they are in when they do come.

For a registry office for boys to be a real success it would have to be connected in some way with the

schools the boys attend. The most feasible scheme, and the most satisfactory, would be to induce one of the local school managers to act as secretary. Once the system was thoroughly started, such a man would be an invaluable connecting link between the large body of employers and the still larger army of employees. Both parties alike would come to him and would listen to his advice, and many a round peg might be prevented from the waste of time and energy involved in the endeavour to fit itself into a square hole. The difficulties involved by such a proposal are obvious, and at first may appear almost insurmountable, the chief obstacle being the large amount of time and energy it would exact from the manager concerned. If managers could be induced to act on more business-like lines, the problem would be a considerably simpler one. At present, there is very rarely anything in the way of a practical division of labour, with the result that much that might be done remains undone, and there is needless overlapping in most of the work on which the managers are engaged. There is no reason why it should be impossible to find a manager willing to act as secretary of a registry office for the boys in his schools, on the understanding that such work should be the chief and essential part of his duties.

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## II

### CLASSIFICATION OF BOY LABOURERS

It is quite impossible in a few pages to give anything like an adequate description of the various forms of work in which the London working boy is engaged. Nevertheless a brief account may be found useful.

The following broad division will serve as a useful basis for further subdivisions later :—

1. Messenger-boys.
2. Office-boys and junior clerks.
3. Boys in domestic service.
4. Van-boys, street traders, and scavengers.
5. Boys at work while still attending school.
6. Boys working at trades in factory, warehouse, or shop.

1. *Boy Messengers*.—Of these the most familiar, since they are also by far the most numerous, are the Post Office Telegraph Messengers. They represent the aristocracy of the messenger world, for a big Government office like the Post Office can afford to pick and choose. No boy is accepted unless he has passed the seventh standard at school, and each candidate has to provide a satisfactory certificate of health from “his own medical attendant”! A boy of fourteen must also be over 4 ft. 8 in. in height. The minimum starting wage in London is

seven shillings a week, rising by a shilling a week annually to eleven shillings. In the inner ring of London, where labour is more expensive, the minimum starting wage is eight shillings. On reaching the age of sixteen the boy has to pass a further examination in order to qualify for retention. Considering the care with which the boys are originally selected, it is surprising what a large proportion are rejected at this further test. Thus, of 400 boys of the prescribed age at a recent examination in the Eastern Central District, 157 were rejected, over 80 as being physically unfit, and 56 on the score of education.

The various private telegraph companies, such as Reuter's and the Eastern, offer much the same terms, though in some cases they are able to get boys slightly cheaper, as the qualifying standard is not such a high one. It is only during the rare periods when the supply of boy labour is more plentiful than usual that the private telegraph companies will refuse a boy on account of his size. The same applies to the District Messenger Company, where the boys sometimes start on as little as six shillings a week; but the company is quite willing to employ boys with some physical disadvantage that would make it very difficult for them to obtain employment elsewhere. Even boys with one arm can be seen in the street in the familiar uniform of the service. Then, again, the varied nature of the work they are called on to perform is an undoubted attraction in the

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eyes of many. They are to be seen keeping places in a queue outside a theatre; they are employed as golf caddies on Sundays; on Stock Exchange account days there is a brisk demand for them in the City, at the rate of half a guinea a day, for the purpose of collecting cheques; a few years ago one was sent to America with instructions to beat the mail, and for a time he was regarded as a hero. A smart boy has a chance of receiving a thorough all-round training that will admirably adapt him for work such as that of valet or courier.

In considering the wages that are paid to these boys, it must be borne in mind that the uniform, and in most cases boots as well, with which they are supplied form an appreciable addition to the real wages that they are earning.

To decry a system without having a feasible alternative to suggest can serve no useful purpose. Telegrams must be delivered, and at present the only possible method of delivery is that now in use. At the same time there are several serious objections to this wholesale employment of boy messengers. To begin with, the large number that are turned away from the Post Office at the age of sixteen as physically unfit lends colour to the belief that for young boys the life is not a healthy one. That it is bad for them morally is less open to doubt. Especially is this the case in the smaller suburban offices, where boys may be sitting idle together an hour or two at a time with wholly inadequate

supervision—a state of affairs that is bound to breed devilry in one form or another. Even when they are more actively employed, the most that they can hope to learn is a very small amount of discipline.

A more serious point is the question as to the future of the boys when they cease to be messengers. Vacancies in the ranks of postmen, sorters, telegraphists, and the like are reserved for a certain number of the employees of the Post Office; the boy employed by the private companies can usually, if he likes, stay on in the service of that company as a clerk. Of the rest, who form the large majority, many, no doubt, find their way eventually into the army or navy; some go to swell the already overcrowded ranks of clerks, and a fair number become absorbed in situations such as that of shop assistant, which are not open to younger boys. A few are sent as messengers by their parents simply to fill up the gap between the age of leaving school and the age when they are old enough to enter their father's business or take up some other definite piece of work.

Of the large class of errand-boys who work for shops no mention has been made. They are essentially transitory creatures, and in many cases allow themselves to be used in this way through sheer laziness. For the boy who really sticks to his work the employer can usually find or make an opening of some sort which will give him regular employment after the age of eighteen. In many cases the boy will stop on as sales-

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man; in some he has a chance of picking up a trade. The most hopeless position is that of the errand-boy at a small shop in a poor neighbourhood, where his prospects are absolutely nil.

2. *Office-boys and Junior Clerks.*—In no class of life has the danger of a little knowledge been more amply demonstrated than in the class we are now considering. The little bits of knowledge spread broadcast by the system of compulsory education have given rise to a new form of folly, which has been aptly described as the “worship of the black coat.” Why it should be considered more dignified to sit on an office-stool all day for a lower wage than a man could earn with his hands, I cannot say. But so it is with many of the working-class families of the present time. They do not even seem to realise that a goodly sum must be deducted from the ever meagre wages of the clerk in a pitiful struggle to keep up appearances, and that a weekly income that would keep a working man in comfort spells semi-starvation for the clerk. Ignorant people, in deciding on a situation for themselves or their sons, are apt to be led astray by the fact that the clerk starts on a higher wage than the manual worker, and is given his rises quicker. Thus a boy of eighteen may be getting some eighteen shillings a week in an office, as compared with the fifteen shillings or so of a boy of the same age who is learning a trade.



Besides this, many of the good offices give the whole of their staff a substantial bonus at Christmas and at mid-summer, and the office-boy is treated as handsomely as anyone. When another five years have elapsed, however, the relative positions of the two have entirely changed, and the skilled mechanic will be earning thirty-five or forty shillings to the twenty-five or thirty of the clerk, a difference which in reality is a good deal more than the bare amount indicated by the figures, on account of the extra expenditure for which the clerk is liable owing to the necessity for "keeping up appearances."

One can understand how the office-stool appeals more to the ambitious boy than the apron of the workshop. Once a mechanic, the chances are that he will always remain one, the position of foreman being, as a rule, the very highest to which he can hope to attain. In the office, though the chances are all against his ever rising above the common herd, to the really smart boy there are practically no limits to the height to which he can make his way. The path to success is there, however cunningly it may be concealed, and the very remoteness of the chance of hitting upon it appeals strongly to the enterprising spirit. The modern Dick Whittington is more likely to make his first real start in life in the counting-house than in the factory.

To the man who deplores this worship of the pen, or to the extremist who sees in it the coming commercial

ruin of the country, some comfort may be offered in the assurance that there is a healthy counteracting influence steadily at work amongst the boys themselves. It may be that the grapes are sour; it may be simply common sense. Whatever the cause, the boy who works with his hands always delights in hurling ridicule at his pen-pushing mate. No doubt there are times when the factory boy or apprentice will regard with secret envy the superior though humble mental capacity of the clerk, but nothing on earth would induce him to acknowledge this fact. This feeling of contempt for office work is one that is widespread amongst boys, and since, moreover, it is one that is apt to find its strongest champions in those who are physically strongest, it cannot but have a deterrent effect on many who are leaving school.

One good point about office work for boys is that the hours of work do give the boy a better chance of getting an adequate amount of sleep. This may seem a trivial point, and one that is hardly worth mentioning, but it really is important. The amount of sleep that a boy in London gets is usually determined solely by the time at which he has to get up. The mere fact of his having to be out of bed by half-past five or six in the morning is not sufficient to make him go to bed any earlier than the boy who has to be up by eight.

3. *Boys in Domestic Service.*—Under this heading we

must be understood to include not only the page-boys of the rich, who form the aristocracy of the class, but also the boys in clubs and hotels, and boy waiters in restaurants and eating-houses. Domestic service in private families is one of the few occupations which seem to be handed down naturally from father to son, and many of the boys who take up this sort of work do so simply because their fathers have done the same before them. There are not enough, however, from this source alone to meet the demand that is created by the increasingly large number of clubs and hotels in existence. It is chiefly with the object of supplying these that House-boy Brigades have been established in various parts of London. There is no doubt of the quality of the training that the boys receive at these homes, but in some of them, at any rate, the conditions of entry are such that they have become the happy dumping-grounds of unions and workhouses from all over the country, rather than places to which the enterprising London boy can go for training. The fact that he must be destitute and an orphan, and that at the same time an entrance fee of £5 must be paid for him, would be sufficient to damp the enthusiasm of most boys who thought of voluntarily entering this class of profession. The money that the boys earn while at the Home ought to be enough to provide funds for working expenses, and it is reasonable to hope that more of these homes with fewer restrictions as to admission may spring up in the near future.

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Similar as they may appear at first sight, there is a great difference between the positions of the club-boy and the hotel-boy. The former has much better prospects in the way of a career to look forward to. All round him he sees club-waiters and stewards who from the same start have risen to a comparatively prosperous position. The latter has only the remote chance of a porter's billet awaiting him. Moreover, the system by which he is paid places him at once in a more precarious, and certainly less dignified, position. He is given, say, five shillings a week, and is expected to make up the rest by tips. Even the boys themselves grow dissatisfied with the work after a short time; and at some of the big terminus hotels in London the average length of the boys' stay is only from three to four months.

At the cheaper restaurants and eating-houses the conditions of employment are still more unsatisfactory. The work leads to nothing; if it has a future at all, it is likely to be that of potman or barman. While it lasts the occupation is desultory and unsettling, and is made specially objectionable by the fact that part of the wage must be made up by tips from the customers.

4. *Van-boys, Street Traders, and Scavengers.*—The van-boys of London are an extremely interesting set of individuals. To begin with, they are recruited chiefly from among the poorest classes of the population, and

then not even from what are sometimes called the respectable poor. They come usually from the alleys and squares which are hidden away in such profusion behind the small thoroughfares; their surroundings at home are squalid; and when, in addition to this, it is remembered that they rarely get much beyond the third or fourth standard at school, it will be seen that they can hardly be said to start work in very auspicious circumstances. Moreover, the work itself seems to have a far from elevating influence on them. The hours are long, and often extend as late as midnight; coarseness and brutality are the distinguishing marks of most of their associates. If we ignore the rare occasions on which clubs secure a hold on them, their lives are without softening or civilising influences of any sort. Many, no doubt, become van-boys because they really are not fit to undertake any more intelligent form of work; others are attracted by the very roughness of the life, which, in their ignorance, they regard as freedom; and before the eyes of all there is dangling the alluring bait of eight shillings a week to start on with possibilities in the way of extra money for overtime. Something, too, must be set down to the undoubted fascination which any form of transport has for a boy; so great is this that it has been found that one in every four boys in a London school will put down some kind of car-driving as his choice of an occupation. A van-boy's work is, it is true, the natural prelude to a

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carman's work; although there is considerable leakage, most of the van-boys become either carmen or railway porters, but the employment is one of the worst paid of the regular trades, and offers very little prospect of a sufficient or a permanent wage. Beginning at eighteen shillings a week, a carman seldom rises to more than twenty-five shillings, unless he has the luck to be employed as a brewer's drayman, or is put in charge of a team; and he is perhaps more commonly thrown out of work by his job being handed over to a youth of seventeen than any other kind of workman.

The question of street-trading is one which has attracted more attention in Manchester and some of the other large towns than it has in London. A system of compulsory registration has been tried, which, though not solving all the difficulties of the matter, has greatly improved the conditions of the newspaper-boys and others who earn their living by hawking goods in the streets. It is something to the good, at any rate, that a boy should be compelled to be decently dressed, and so avoid the obvious temptation of appealing to the sympathies of the public by the picturesque raggedness of his clothing. At the same time, one cannot help feeling that half-way legislation of this sort is only playing with the problem, and that the only really satisfactory law would be one which prohibited street-trading by children altogether. It is difficult to imagine a life which could be worse for a young boy. Apart

from the moral dangers, it is a means of earning a livelihood which, perhaps, more than any other is subject to the most violent fluctuations. In a week during which events of unusual public interest are taking place a boy can make as much as twelve shillings or fifteen shillings by selling newspapers; all through the chief racing seasons the average is also a high one. But when there is little racing, and in dull times or in bad weather, he is often lucky if he makes as much as five shillings. In the same way the takings of other sorts of street traders depend chiefly on the weather, and fluctuate with the season of the year.

But the uncertainty of the income is a trifling evil by comparison with the certainty of the bad moral effects of street-trading on boys and youths. These are so well known that it is unnecessary to dwell upon them here; and, indeed, they may be summed up in a sentence. The life of the street trader is a continual gamble, unredeemed by any steady work; it is undisciplined and casual, and exposed to all the temptations of the street at its worst. A few of the boys who sell papers may eventually be taken on permanently by the newspaper offices as cyclist-distributors of the evening editions, earning a pound a week or so; a very few may rise to be drivers of the newspaper carts. But the great majority drift away into crime or idleness or some form of living by their wits.

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One class of the street sellers, however, stands rather by itself. The costers are almost more a caste than a class, and the boys who begin by going out with their fathers' barrows often inherit some of the peculiar aptitudes and even virtues which mark the regular coster. They are rough, and their life is anything but a steady one; but they have a far better chance of doing moderately well than the street seller who does not belong to the caste, and the irregularities seem to do them far less harm.

5. *Schoolboy Workers*.—The employment of children of school age is a subject which, like that of street-selling, has been brought into a good deal of prominence in recent years, thanks to the efforts of those who are interested in the education of the children. It has also received attention in a less desirable form at the hands of a certain class of somewhat sensational journalists, who paint in lurid colours pictures that are often very misleading of what they are pleased to call the "white slaves of England." Unfortunately there is a great deal of truth in the accusations which they bring, and it needs no small amount of self-restraint to speak, however briefly, in dispassionate terms of much of the work that is done in London by children under the age of fourteen.

Nearly ten per cent. of the school children of London are engaged in some sort of work other than their



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school work. The work they do falls naturally into three classes :—

- (a) Working for shops as assistants or errand-boys.
- (b) Street-trading.
- (c) Home industries.

The first class consists chiefly of boys who work for grocers, butchers, and hairdressers, and of boys who are employed to deliver papers and milk. Some few are employed in work that entails no very great hardship, as errand-boys on Saturday only, for instance; but the majority work right through the week, before school, during the dinner-hour, after school, and again on Saturdays, and even in some cases on Sundays. Thus boys of twelve or thirteen may be seen serving in small shops, or shouting at the barrows outside till midnight on Saturday, and the barber's lather-boy, after doing a full day's work on Saturday, will still have three or four hours' work waiting for him on Sunday. Moreover, it is work that has to be done in a far from healthy moral atmosphere, as many of the small hairdressers' shops are used as centres for gambling and other forms of vice. Then, how can a small boy be expected to learn anything in school, or even to keep awake, if he is out with the milk-cans from five o'clock in the morning? Two shillings or half a crown is the most that is earned for as much as thirty or forty hours' work a week, and boys will often work for less.

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Long before they reach their teens children may be seen in the streets of London hawking matches, flowers, papers, or toys, meeting with no more serious obstacle than an occasional moving on by the police; for the law is inadequate to stop them. True, it is illegal for a child under the age of eleven to sell goods in the street, but the parent or guardian, and not the child, is considered the offender in the eyes of the law, and the offence has to be committed *within sight of a constable*. A useful law! Few things could have a worse effect than this street-trading on those engaged in it. It initiates them to the mysteries of the beggar's whine, and breeds in them the craving for an irregular, undisciplined method of life.

Of the three classes of work, the last is perhaps that which lends itself to the greatest abuse. Shop-workers are protected to some extent by laws and County Council regulations; the street traders do at any rate carry on their trade in the eyes of the public, and this fact acts as some sort of a check, even though the laws are inadequate for the purpose. For the children who work at home there exist none of these safeguards. The vigilance of the school-attendance inspector can ensure their not being worked to any large extent during school hours, but apart from this the power of the parents is practically unlimited. In many cases it is a power which is used most unmercifully, especially in the poorest class of family. Girls are the chief

sufferers, employed as they are for needlework and kindred occupations, but boys are often dragged into the same state of bondage for making match-boxes, cardboard-boxes, artificial flowers, and the like. Practically the whole of the work that is done at home is badly paid work, and the families who engage in it have to work from earliest morning to last thing at night before they can hope to earn even a starvation wage.

6. *Boys working at Trades in Factory, Workshop, or Warehouse.*—In the preceding sections we have dealt chiefly with the occupations which are unskilled or unorganised. Most of them fall under the head of “boy’s work”; and of these the great defect is that they do not form an introduction to any satisfactory “man’s work.” Many of them, it is true, are an integral and necessary part of the present system of industry; but that does not mean that they are an integral or necessary part of the boy’s industrial life. It would be better for both boy and man if they could be replaced by intelligent machines. It is certainly the case, moreover, that the majority of the ordinary working boys of London, the boys of the poorer classes with whom this book deals, begin their working life in one of the unorganised and unspecialised occupations. But some are more fortunate, and, partly by accident, more often by the good sense of their parents, are put into a trade which offers some sort of a steady career. It is impossible to say what

the number of these may be; judging from experience of the poorer class of boys, the proportion is small; but one finds even the very poor parents here and there taking pains to get their boys taken on in some capacity or other by a well-established firm.

This does not mean, however, that the boys are apprenticed to a skilled trade. Such parents cannot pay the usual premium of twenty or thirty pounds; and though a few special funds and societies exist for the purpose of apprenticing poor boys, their operations are on a small scale. The largest of them, the East London Apprenticing Fund, does not apprentice more than fifty a year. It is to be remembered, too, that apprenticeship is not now the usual method for entering a skilled trade; it is more common for a boy to be taken on as a learner, and tried for what he is worth without any agreement or indentures; and this method, though unsatisfactory in some ways, has also advantages over the older method of apprenticeship.

But the skilled trades form only a small part of the occupations which fall under this section. The well-organised industries include a much greater variety of occupations; the only essential thing is that the industry shall be an organised one, in which steady work at fairly good wages is reasonably assured for the steady worker. The goods department of a railway company fulfils these conditions; so do many factories and large warehouses; and one may feel that a boy who has

started work in one of these has at any rate an opportunity of doing well. We cannot turn all the boys into mechanics or skilled artisans. The great majority of workers must be what we must still describe technically as unskilled. For them the essential things are regular and steady work, with opportunity for the use of intelligence and reward for good character. So far as these can be guaranteed at all in our industrial system, they are to be secured for the ordinary boy of the poorer grades of the working classes by employment in the trades we have indicated in this section; and friends of the boys may be content if they can do anything to get the boys they know into the employment of a good firm in which the ordinary unskilled workman is paid a wage of twenty-seven or twenty-eight shillings a week, and is not likely to lose his work except for some fault of his own.

## THE CRIMINAL BOY

By ARTHUR LOWRY

**W**HATEVER system of classification may be adopted in describing the London boy, it is inevitable that one of the sub-heads should be "The Criminal Boy." The adoption of such a title, of course, involves a danger inherent in all classification: the danger, that is, that a group of individuals selected by reason of their possessing one common characteristic may be mistaken for a real species. That a certain number of boys are born into the world marked out congenitally for a criminal career is probable enough. Lombroso and his followers would permit no doubt upon the point. Indeed, few men can have reached middle life without encountering cases which can hardly be explained except upon the supposition of the existence of a real criminal species. Thackeray noted this fact with his usual clear insight. "Some there are," he says, "on whom quite in their early lives dark Ahrimanes has seemed to lay his dread mark; children, yet corrupt and wicked of tongue; tender of age, yet cruel; who should be truth-telling and generous (they were at their mothers' bosoms yesterday), but are false and cold and greedy before their time. Infants almost, they practise the arts and

selfishness of old men. Behind their candid faces are wiles and selfishness and a hideous precocity of artifice. I can recall such, and in the vista of far-off, unforgotten boyhood can see marching that sad little procession of *enfants perdus*. May they be saved, pray Heaven!" Pray Heaven they may! So far as this world is concerned, such *enfants perdus*, if they belong to a rank of life exempt from that strange eclectic disease known as kleptomania, will eventually become "habitual offenders," or "recidivists." The impressions of their thumbs will be familiar to the authorities; the police magistrate, the police-court missionary and reporter will know them well; and on their demise the number of their convictions and the years they have spent in prison may be thought worthy of commemoration in the cheaper sort of newspaper.

Whatever may be the precise number of those who are irredeemably criminal from birth, at all events it is safe to assert that they form only a small proportion of those who commit crimes. It is a mere commonplace that savages are children, and must be treated as such. Perhaps it is less generally recognised that children are savages, and can only by training be brought up to the average level—low enough it may be, but infinitely higher than theirs—of contemporary civilisation. It is humiliating to those of us who still feel the savage rampant within to reflect upon the loving care with which in our early days we were sheltered from

hunger and cold and every discomfort, while, by precept and example, with holy craft and righteous device, we were taught to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. Should we have escaped whipping, had it not been for the pains which were taken to wean us from the traditions of the period of the *bellum omnium contra omnes*? In truth, when one reflects upon the number of "homes that are no homes" in London, the wonder is not that the children who fall into crime are so many, but that they are so few.

The materials for estimating the precise amount of crime among boys are insufficient. In all study of criminal statistics two facts have constantly to be borne in mind. One is that a considerable amount of crime remains undetected, the other that in many cases where crime might be brought home to the criminal, prosecutions do not, in fact, take place. There is no reason to suppose that the amount of undetected juvenile crime is on the increase, but there can be little doubt that there is a growing tendency on the part of the public to abstain from prosecuting juvenile offenders. As Mr. Morrison points out in his *Juvenile Offenders* (published in 1896), "the attitude of the public mind and the attitude of the judicial mind towards juvenile offenders have been and are still undergoing important modifications in the direction of greater leniency and indulgence. The result of this is that there is less inclination on the part of the public to prosecute than used to be the



case; and when prosecutions do take place there is a distinct tendency to mitigate the seriousness of the charges preferred against the young."

Since 1893 the "Criminal Statistics" for England and Wales have contained figures showing the number of persons convicted at various age-periods in each year. The figures for the ages 12 to 16 and 16 to 21 of those convicted of indictable offences are as follows :—\*

	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
Ages 12-16	6,604	5,330	5,773	5,625	6,104	5,715	6,550	6,185	6,243
„ 16-21	9,568	8,634	7,834	8,063	8,489	7,592	8,046	8,468	8,570

Commenting on these statistics up to the year 1901, the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools remarks: "For what these figures are worth as a measure of juvenile crime, they certainly do not show any alarming tendency to increase." This is true, but, even allowing for the increase of population, it is equally true that the figures give little satisfaction to those who look for a steady diminution in the amount of juvenile crime. Moreover, there is the allowance to be made for the increasing tendency to indulgence.

This tendency is a growth of comparatively recent years. It was not until well on in the nineteenth century that the law recognised the advisability of drawing a distinction between juvenile crime and adult

\* The figures given here and elsewhere relate to the whole of England and Wales unless otherwise stated. London, unfortunately, is not a separate entity for the purpose of criminal statistics.

crime. A crime was a crime, and the punishment was death, or transportation, or penal servitude, or whatever it might be. The criminal, adult or juvenile, had to be deterred from repeating his offence, and others had to be deterred from following his evil example. Still, it has always been a maxim of the law that a child under seven years of age is incapable of committing a crime. After the age of seven and up to the age of fourteen the presumption is that a child is not responsible, but the presumption may be rebutted.

According to the classification adopted for the purposes of the Summary Jurisdiction Acts, and generally for laws which deal with youthful offenders, anyone up to the age of twelve is a "child," a child between the ages of twelve and sixteen is a "young person," and a person, young or old, aged sixteen years and upwards is an "adult."

The legal definition which lumps together youths physically and mentally undeveloped with those whom common sense would admit to be grown up is worth a little examination at a later stage. For the present we may acquiesce in the doctrine that a boy of sixteen is an "adult," and proceed to consider the provision which the law has made for dealing with criminals who are "children" or "young persons."

The credit of the first systematic attempts to secure the reformation of the youthful offender belongs to the Philanthropic Society, which was founded in 1788 and

incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1806 for the protection of the children of convicts. This society did much good work in receiving and reforming criminal children after they had expiated their offences. It became the custom for the Crown, in cases considered suitable, to grant pardons to children under sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment upon condition of their placing themselves under the care of some charitable institution for the reception and reformation of young offenders. In the year 1837 Parkhurst Prison was founded for the reception of boys sentenced to transportation. The objects sought to be attained were "the penal correction of the boy, with a view to deter not himself alone, but juvenile offenders generally from the commission of crime; and the moral reformation of the culprit." Parkhurst, however (where, it is recorded, "at first all wore irons"), is almost a forgotten episode. Transportation came to an end, charitable institutions for the reception of criminal children multiplied, and Parkhurst Prison was closed in 1864. It is worth remarking that the Act establishing the prison did not specify any limits of age for a "juvenile offender," and that of the 198 lads there in the year 1863 only 36 were under 16 years of age, while 7 were aged 20 and upwards, the remainder being between the ages of 16 and 20.

The reformatory system was established on a statutory basis in 1854, by an Act enabling "Schools for the

better training of juvenile offenders" to obtain a certificate from the Home Secretary, and become "Certified Reformatory Schools." The schools were placed under Government inspection, and the Courts were authorised to send to them juvenile offenders under sixteen convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than fourteen days.

Subsequent legislation has created a special Inspector of Reformatory [and Industrial] Schools, and has somewhat modified the conditions of committal. The preliminary imprisonment has been abolished; twelve years of age has been established as the minimum age of admission; three years have been made the minimum and five the maximum period of detention, and no offender may be detained beyond the age of nineteen; and an offender may be licensed, on probation, after at least half of his period of detention has expired.

The reformatory, then, is primarily a charitable institution founded and supported by the efforts of private persons; but the State contributes towards the maintenance of the children, a contribution to a slight extent reimbursed by the payments exacted from the parents of offenders. The councils of counties and of Quarter Sessions Boroughs may also contribute towards the expenses of reformatories. The total receipts of reformatories in 1902 amounted to £106,580, of which £92,007 came from public funds.

The salient features of the reformatory system were

well described in the last report made by the Rev. Sydney Turner, the first Inspector of Reformatory Schools.

In this report, written in 1876, after recounting the early history of the reformatory movement, in which he was himself a pioneer, he said :—

“ The main lines on which the original Act and all its subsequent amendments proceeded are much the same as those which have been followed in America, France, etc., viz. the detention of the offender for a long period of corrective and industrial training, the introduction of the family system and domestic feelings and habits into the schools, and the keeping of the offender under supervision after leaving the school, by placing him out in employment on probation under licence (or ticket of leave) previous to his final discharge.

“ But the English system of reformatory action was especially distinguished by three important features, to which I believe much of its remarkable success, both in reclaiming the criminal and in checking and preventing crime, is owing.

“ The first of these was the recognition and enforcement of the duty of the parents of the young offenders sent to reformatory schools to contribute to their maintenance while under detention. This provision was at first regarded as more speculative than practical, one which recognised a most important principle, but from which no practical result could ever be realised. Experience has, however, shown not only its value, but its reasonableness; and while the contributions from this source for reformatory and industrial schools were £2,439 in 1861 on a

total of 4,827 inmates, they had risen to £18,044 in 1875 on a corresponding total of 17,391.\*

"The second was the provision in the Reformatory Schools Acts that the sentence to corrective training and detention should include the commitment of the offender for a short period of imprisonment previous to his being admitted to the school.

"Nothing has been more certainly demonstrated in the practical development of the reformatory system than that juvenile crime has comparatively little to do with any special depravity of the offender, and very much to do with parental neglect and bad example. But, on the other hand, it is most important as well for the moral impression to be made on the offenders themselves as for the discouragement to crime and the impression made on the public feeling of the community, that all wrongdoing, however originally suggested or afterwards encouraged by external influences, should be punished, and that vice and mischief should not seem to be rewarded and encouraged, or so treated as to place those guilty of them in a better position than the children of respectable and honest parents. The preliminary punishment of the offender, involving the disgrace of a public conviction, contributed materially to this object.

"The third distinguishing feature of the English system which I regard as one of the keystones of its success has been that, while assisted and superintended by the State, the schools are essentially conducted and controlled by voluntary management, and have throughout retained an independent and partially charitable character.

"This has secured two essential advantages ; on the one

\* The corresponding figures in 1902 were £28,610 and 23,234.

hand, it has opened to the inmates of the schools means and opportunities of employment and openings for gaining an independent livelihood on their discharge from detention which no juvenile house of correction under purely official management, whether governmental or magisterial, could have given them, enlisting and interesting in their disposal private individuals of all classes, and allowing them to enter life without any brand or drawback from the character of the place they come from, substituting the school and benevolent asylum for what must always have had more or less of the character of a prison."

Mr. Turner's description of the management and methods of reformatory schools needs little modification at the present day. The preliminary period of imprisonment has been abolished, and the modern spirit finds it difficult to understand the stress which was laid upon its importance. The voluntary management remains, though there are not wanting those who question its advantages.

There were at the end of 1902, twenty-nine reformatory schools for boys in England and Wales, two of them being training ships, the *Akbar* and the *Cornwall*. These schools contained, on the 31st December, 1902, 3,527 boys. At the same date 800 boys were "on licence." The total number of boys who had passed through English reformatory schools was 43,493.

Reformatory schools differ from one another considerably in size and in other characteristics. The numbers accommodated in the several schools vary from above

300 to below 50. They are all under voluntary management, and necessarily the individual views of the various bodies of managers have a fairly free scope, but uniformity is supplied by the Government inspection and the qualified control of the Home Secretary, so that in practice the routine of the schools is much the same.

Briefly, the routine is as follows: The day begins and ends with simple family worship; the intervening hours are parcelled out between work, school instruction, meals, and recreation, according to a time-table, which requires the approval of the inspector. Boys under fourteen are, for not less than three hours a day, instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and as far as practicable in the elements of history, geography, and singing, or other subjects approved by the inspector. Industrial training is given in farm and garden work and "such handicrafts as can be conveniently practised." The boys are allowed two hours daily for recreation, and are taken out regularly or allowed out for exercise beyond the school boundaries.

When a boy leaves the reformatory, whether on licence or on his final discharge from detention, the managers undertake to provide him with a sufficient outfit and to place him so far as possible in some suitable employment or service.

The statistics show that of the 43,493 boys who up to the end of 1902 had passed through reformatories in England and Wales, 14,137 were discharged to employ-



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ment, 15,159 to friends, 3,220 were emigrated, 6,901 were sent to sea, and 1,354 enlisted. The remainder (2,712, or less than 6 per cent.) are accounted for as having died or absconded or having been discharged owing to disease or incorrigibility.

These figures are rather too large and indefinite to convey much impression to the mind. The most noticeable point about them is the large proportion of boys returned to friends, presumably in a considerable number of cases to the very persons responsible for the boys' original lapse. The number of those sent to sea (about 16 per cent.) and of those who joined the army (say 3 per cent.) appear disappointingly small, as the sea and the army would seem to offer careers especially suitable to boys who are friendless or who are better kept away from their friends.

The figures relating to boys disposed of in the three years 1899, 1900, and 1901 are perhaps more instructive, supplemented as they are by information as to the position of the boys at the end of 1902.

The boys numbered 2,985. Of these 681 went to employment away from friends, 728 to employment living with friends, 663 returned to friends of decent character, 104 to friends of doubtful character, or otherwise undesirable, 58 were emigrated, 524 went to sea, and 154 enlisted.

The noticeable features of these figures as compared with those for the longer period are the reduction in

the proportion of those returned to friends whether of decent or doubtful character, and the increase in the proportion of those enlisted (5 per cent. as against 3 per cent.). It must be mentioned, however, that the three years coincided with the South African war, during which all boys' thoughts turned to the army. The percentage of those sent to sea was slightly higher than that shown by the figures of the longer period.

The information obtained as to the position at the end of 1902 of the boys discharged during the three years showed that 2,369 or 80 per cent. were in regular employment, 306 or 10 per cent. had been convicted of crime, and the remainder were dead, disabled, not in regular employment, or lost sight of. The percentage of reconvictions is rather startling. It is perhaps significant that of the 767 who returned to friends 101, or more than 13 per cent., relapsed into crime. Probably it would be unjust to attribute the blame entirely to unsatisfactory home influences. No doubt a considerable number of the boys returned to friends are difficult boys for whom the managers have not found it possible to obtain employment. Nevertheless, it does not seem satisfactory that one out of every ten boys discharged during the three years ending December, 1901, should have been convicted of crime by the end of the year 1902.

It must not be supposed that committal to a reformatory is the only weapon with which the law combats

juvenile crime. Detention in a reformatory has not entirely superseded imprisonment in the treatment of youthful offenders. During the last thirty years the annual number of boys under sixteen years of age committed to prisons in England and Wales has shown a fairly regular decrease from 8,062 in 1873 to 1,050 in 1902. The commitments to reformatories in 1902 numbered 1,056. In the London prisons during the course of 1902 there were 251 boys under the age of sixteen. One of these desperadoes was under twelve.

By no means every young criminal who comes before the Courts is either imprisoned or sent to a reformatory. Since the year 1899 practically every offence which a boy can commit, except homicide, is punishable summarily. The magistrates have availed themselves to the full of the extension of their powers, and very few boys are now committed for trial. The discretion which the magistrates possess is very wide, and in the exercise of it they discharge many a youthful criminal or bind him over to come up for judgment when called on. Other swords which they have against the young malefactor are whipping and fines. Whipping is a solemn function, the chastisement being inflicted in private by a constable in the presence of a superior officer, and, if they wish it, the boy's parents. Opinions differ as to the efficacy of whipping as a deterrent. In some cases the recollection of the physical pain may serve as a reminder that the way of the evildoer is hard, but it is to be feared that,

more often, a boy who has been whipped either feels that he is a hero or that he is disgraced. In either case he is apt to think that he must live up to his reputation, and the results are disastrous.

It is an interesting fact, and one perhaps worthy of consideration, that the only European countries other than Great Britain where the penalty of whipping is recognised by the Criminal Law are Denmark and Norway. Nevertheless, according to the editor of the *Judicial Statistics*, one of the features of the tendency as to punishment in England and Wales during the ten years ending in 1902 was an increase in cases of whipping of juvenile offenders. It is obvious, therefore, that the abolition of whipping as a form of judicial punishment is hardly a question of practical politics at the moment, and it is necessary to consider what can be said in its favour. For one thing, it provides a means for meeting cases which for various reasons a magistrate may think unsuitable for treatment by any other of the methods which the law at present offers him. To commit a boy to prison or to a reformatory is to effect a very serious disturbance in his life and prospects. The Departmental Committee of 1895 on Reformatory and Industrial Schools expressed a strong opinion that a child ought not to be sent to a reformatory unless the magistrate is satisfied that for the protection of the community and in order to correct the child of his criminal habits it is necessary to remove him from his parents and surround-

ings and detain him for a term of years. No doubt this is the view upon which most magistrates act; but cases come before them in which it may be well that the offenders should remain in their normal surroundings, but receive something more tangible than a warning to remind them that there are certain acts from which they must refrain. Here, then, a magistrate may be thrown back upon the alternatives of a whipping or a fine, and a considerable number of those who have considered the question are in favour of the whipping. At the same time, there are magistrates who would not consent in any circumstances to order the birch. This was recognised by the Scottish Committee of 1895 on Habitual Offenders, etc., who suggested that to meet the widespread objection to the use of the birch it might be well to allow magistrates in all cases to order the punishment to be inflicted on the hand with a leathern tawse, "an implement to the innocuous, yet deterrent, effects of which many of them will be able to testify from personal experience." A joke in a Blue Book, and a Scottish Blue Book, is not a thing which it is fair to scan very closely. No one would seriously place in the same category a familiar punishment allotted to a boy at school almost as part of the curriculum and a chastisement the same in degree inflicted by the law on a culprit who has the dimmest ideas of his relation to the State. The fact that corporal punishment is an "institution" at our great public schools has, however, it can scarcely be doubted,

and the opinion of many who favour the whipping of useful offenders. But the case is not proved because modern representative of the house of Shallow is to assert that the floggings he received at school do a man of me, sir, by gad."

Whipping is, like revenge, a kind of wild justice. It punishes the delinquent and produces some form of sorrow, no doubt is, to an extent, a deterrent; but it has nothing ameliorative about it. It leaves the boy in precisely the same conditions as before, exposed to the same influences and temptations, and perhaps imbued with a deeper respect for the eleventh commandment. The same objection applies, in some degree, to fining. A fine is not in itself ameliorative, and has besides some special disadvantages. Not the least is the certainty that the boy's moral consciousness is confused by the (im)mexplicable fact that one offence may be expiated by a payment of ten shillings, while another, indistinguishable from it as an act of wrongdoing, is punished by a month's imprisonment. But punishment by imprisonment has several advantages over whipping. There is nothing degrading about it, still less does it afford the offender any cause for boasting. It is not a punishment which a critic, however sensitive, can shudder; and it is the one penalty which can be obliterated if the offender should afterwards prove to have been innocent. On the whole, if the principle be admitted that there are cases in which the State has done enough if it has

merely punished the juvenile offender, the fine offers the most serviceable weapon. It is, of course, a weapon which should be used with the greatest discrimination. Imprisonment ought not to be the alternative in default of payment, and the amount of the fine should have some reference to the means of the culprit and his parents.

It has been objected, indeed, that the punishment really falls upon the parents. No doubt it does as a rule, but the objection is not a forcible one. If the parents are good parents, any punishment inflicted on their son will cause them suffering, and they will gladly undergo hardship rather than see him sent to prison or reformatory. If they are bad or careless parents, the inconvenience of paying a fine will act as an incentive to a better performance of their duties. This the law has recognised in a salutary enactment of 1901, which enables magistrates to order neglectful and culpable parents to pay fines, damages, or costs in respect of offences of which their children are found guilty.

The analogies between crime and disease are many, and have often been pointed out. So far, we have only considered the remedial measures which are at present in vogue. Prophylaxis has not, however, been neglected by the State. It is generally recognised that the conditions most conducive to crime are found where large masses of people are collected together in areas so confined that the proper modicum of cleanliness, light, and

fresh air is unattainable. The phrase "overcrowding and its attendant evils" has been used by every politician and by every journalist, and "hot-bed of crime" has almost found its way into our dictionaries as a definition of "slum." Parliament, philanthropists, and local authorities have striven to abolish overcrowding. It is no disparagement of their efforts to say that, so far, they have failed. The social and economic conditions which have increased the populations of great towns at the expense of the country districts have been too strong for them. The Inspector of Reformatory Schools writes in his last report: "The influx from country to town goes on, and the social evils of congestion in the towns are bound to keep up a fairly constant supply of lads and girls whose one fair chance is committal to a reformatory school."

In the meantime the State has not forgotten to provide means whereby children who are in a fair way to become criminals may be rescued from the predisposing conditions. Industrial schools are provided for children in this category under the age of fourteen. The children qualified for admission are those found begging or wandering, homeless and without visible means of subsistence, destitute children who are orphans or whose surviving parent is in prison, children of a woman twice convicted of crime, children who frequent the company of thieves or live with prostitutes or frequent their company, children uncontrollable by their parents or



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guardians, children in Poor Law schools who are "refractory" or have a parent convicted of crime, and certain classes of children whose attendance at elementary schools it has been impossible to secure. To this list must be added children who are qualified for admission to reformatories in every respect except age, that is, children guilty of an offence punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment, but under the age of twelve and not previously convicted. Industrial schools are, generally speaking, conducted on the same lines as reformatories, but a child may be sent at any age up to fourteen, and the period of detention is only limited by the provision that it must not extend beyond the time when a child reaches the age of sixteen. The child remains, however, under the "supervision" of the managers of the school up to the age of eighteen, and in certain circumstances may be recalled to the school for a period not exceeding three months if it is necessary for his protection.

The majority of industrial schools are boarding schools to which children are sent for a period of years, and they closely resemble reformatories. The chief theoretic difference between the two classes of schools consists in the fact that all children in reformatories are convicts, while those in industrial schools for the most part are not. Such practical difference as there is in the administration arises from the fact that the average age is much higher in the former class of school than in the

latter. Industrial schools also are not entirely in the hands of voluntary managers, several having been founded by school boards and other local authorities. The total number of industrial schools for boys in England and Wales in 1902 was 54, and two others received both boys and girls. The number of boys under detention in these schools at the end of the year was 10,636. The number of admissions during the year was 2,209.

There are two interesting varieties of the industrial school, namely truant schools and day industrial schools. The truant school is a boarding school, and, as its name implies, the children sent to it are offenders against the laws which require their attendance at elementary schools. The periods of detention are short, the maximum for a first admission being three months.

Day industrial schools are for any children who might be sent to a boarding industrial school, except such as are without a home or destitute. They are, of course, intended only for children who may properly be allowed to live with their parents or friends. Boys committed to a day industrial school are detained there during the day from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The maximum period of detention is three years, and detention ceases when the age of fourteen is reached. The parents of a child in a day industrial school may be ordered to pay not more than two shillings a week towards the cost of the child's maintenance in the school.

Before closing this account of the agencies at work to

rescue children especially exposed to criminal influences, a power possessed by boards of guardians should be mentioned. The Poor Law Acts, 1889 and 1899, enable them to assume parental rights and powers in respect of children maintained by them who are deserted or orphans, or whose parent is unfit to have charge of them by reason of mental deficiency or vicious habits, or is under sentence of penal servitude, or in an inebriates' home, is imprisoned for an offence against any of his or her children, or is in the workhouse, permanently bed-ridden or disabled, and consents. The guardians may exercise the parental rights and powers until the child reaches the age of eighteen.

We have now sketched roughly the machinery provided for manufacturing good citizens out of bad or indifferent material. The precise amount of such material in London is difficult to estimate, but some interesting information on the subject may be gathered from the report of the Metropolitan Asylums Board for 1902. On the first of January in that year three homes were opened by the Board for the reception of children who had been taken before a police magistrate and remanded for further inquiries. 1,786 boys and 235 girls were remanded to these homes in the course of the year. The causes of their arrest were as follows :—

In 621 cases, felony (various forms of theft for the most part).  
 „ 165 „ larceny.  
 „ 274 „ begging.

In 504 cases, wandering or without visible means.

„ 154 „ beyond control or not under control of parents.

„ 73 „ living in houses of ill-fame.

„ 11 „ sleeping out.

The information in the possession of the Board was unfortunately not complete, and in the case of 440 of the children the ultimate disposal is entered as “unknown.” Of those whose fate was known 503 were discharged, 46 were birched, 81 were fined or “bound over,” 45 were handed over to the police-court missionary, and 819 were sent to reformatory or industrial schools.

There is clearly plenty of material for the reformatory machinery to work upon. That the work it does turn out is satisfactory may be admitted. Whether it is equal to dealing with all the material, whether it works smoothly in all its parts, or is the best that modern science can devise, is perhaps questionable. It may be helpful to consider its operation in an individual case.

A London boy aged thirteen is accused of stealing and taken up by a constable. It is too late to take the boy before a police magistrate, so he is taken to a police station and spends the night in a police cell. Next morning he is taken before a magistrate and remanded for a week to one of the remand homes. Here he spends his week among fellow-unfortunates, well clothed, well fed, well looked after, and taught. In the meantime the school attendance officer for the

district from which he comes is making inquiries about him and his parents and vacancies in reformatory schools. At the end of the week the boy is taken to the court again. Possibly a different magistrate hears the case. The police produce the information which they have gathered concerning the boy's home and friends. The proceedings are soon over, and the boy is off to a reformatory where there is a vacancy and the managers are willing to receive him. So he disappears from the ken of police, school attendance officer, police magistrate, and Metropolitan Asylums Board.

One or two comments suggest themselves on this procedure. In the first place, why should the boy spend a night in a police cell; why should he not at once be taken to a remand home? Of course, the answer is that the police cannot, as the law stands, take him to a remand home until he is remanded, and there is no place available except the police station. It is only fair, also, to say that whatever may have been the practice in years past, the greatest care is taken now to keep boys away from adults in the police cells.

A much more serious matter is the defenceless position of the boy when he is on his trial. He may be guilty or he may not. It is certain that appearances are against him, or he would not have been arrested. In any case, it lies with him to prove his innocence. How is he to do it? He is young, probably ill-educated, and inexperienced. It is impossible for him to present his

case properly. And so he goes to the reformatory. The odds are enormously in favour of his being guilty, but the point is that he has not a fair chance of defending himself.

The procedure is eminently happy-go-lucky ; in other words, is characteristically English. It is also characteristic of the English nation to admit that things are ordered better in other countries, so no apology is needed for instancing methods adopted elsewhere in dealing with children brought before the Courts. The system in vogue in Massachusetts is often cited as a model. In that State the child is brought before a Court without passing through a police station. The case is heard apart from those of persons of full age, a separate session being held and the court cleared before the child is admitted. The parents are summoned to be present at the trial, which is also attended by representatives of a Government Department—the State Board of Lunacy and Charity—and a public official, known as the Probation Officer. Representatives of various charitable societies are also generally present at the trial, and the case is often disposed of by the judge handing the child over to one of these societies. The most interesting feature of the system is the “Probation Officer.” One or more of these officers is appointed and paid by each township in the State. His functions are to act as guide, philosopher, and friend to the children committed to his charge, and as a material conscience to

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neglectful parents. There are three classes of children who are committed to his charge. The tendency of the Courts is to avoid formal convictions as far as possible in the case of children, and many young offenders are found to be "neglected children" or "dependent children," and as such are, without conviction, handed over to the Probation Officer. In the third class are certain juvenile offenders whom the Court think it unnecessary to commit to an industrial school. In these cases sentence is suspended, and the children are handed over to the Probation Officer or some charitable society.

During the period for which a child is committed to his charge the Probation Officer has to watch carefully over its conduct and circumstances. As a rule, the child continues to live with its parents or friends the normal life of any child that has not come in contact with the law; but the Probation Officer is in the background to see that the child's education is not neglected and that harmful influences are kept at bay. He has to keep the careless parents up to the mark and to assist the merely incompetent with his advice; and his task is naturally not an easy one. In the last resort, if his efforts are unavailing and the child's reformation under its normal conditions does not progress, he reports the facts to the Court, and the child may be committed to an industrial school. Somewhat similar systems are in force in other States of America and in some of our colonies. Their most attractive feature lies in the

system of supervision of the child while living the ordinary life of children. The child is not segregated from the more fortunate children of his own age and standing, and parental responsibility is enforced by precept or example instead of by the exaction of money payments. There is another great advantage in the fact that the Courts have the assistance of experienced officials in deciding upon the treatment appropriate in individual cases. Thus in the State of Michigan it is part of the duty of the "County Agents" to make themselves acquainted with all the circumstances of any child charged with an offence, and to advise the Court as to the disposal of the child.

Assistance in the same direction can be given by voluntary societies such as exist in France and in Belgium for the defence of accused children. Whatever may be thought of the practicability of supervision in London, it can hardly be doubted that much benefit would result from a completer investigation of the circumstances of each juvenile offender. It is not to be supposed that any considerable miscarriage of justice takes place, but it is permissible to doubt whether the magisterial decision is always that best suited to the individual case. The magistrate has before him each day a great variety of cases with which he has to deal. When a boy is brought before him and the offence is proved, he has little to go by except the information received from the school attendance officer, whose



object in life is to secure as high a percentage as possible of attendances at elementary schools in his district. There is obviously a gap that needs to be supplied. Practically every boy who is charged with an offence is remanded, pending inquiries, to one of the remand homes. These are three in number and easily accessible, being situated in Harrow Road, Pentonville Road, and Camberwell Green. Any association which would undertake to investigate the cases of boys under remand would do a considerable amount of good and deserve the thanks of the hard-worked magistrates. Probably one of the first reforms in the present system that such an association would seek to secure would be the establishment of a special Court to deal with all cases of juvenile offenders.

At present it is not sufficiently recognised that the desire to keep juvenile offenders altogether apart from the ordinary machinery of police stations and police courts is based on something more than sentiment. No doubt there has been somewhat too much cant talked about the "stigma" and "taint" attaching to these institutions. It is not to be denied that there is risk of moral contamination to the young from the association with adult crime which cannot be entirely avoided under the present system, but the necessity for a change rests on more positive considerations. No one questions that juvenile crime differs from adult crime in as great a degree as the mind of a boy differs from the mind of a

man. The State has accepted this view in recognising the reformatory system. What is needed now is an extension of the principle so as to provide separate treatment throughout for juvenile crime, so far as is reasonable and practicable. The forms and methods of the ordinary courts are essentially designed for the treatment of adult crime. Speaking broadly, all that the courts have to do is to find out whether the accused person has committed the crime and, if he has, to inflict a punishment in the selection of which the limits of choice are very narrow. For the proper treatment of juvenile crime, on the other hand, and the selection of the appropriate punishment it is most necessary that the Court should be fully acquainted with all the antecedent circumstances of the crime and the conditions of the criminal. However well this necessity may be met in our courts as they now exist, it cannot be doubted that it would be met better in a court where the only business would be the treatment of juvenile offenders. Such a court would inevitably attract all associations and individuals interested in the eradication of crime, and the experience it would gain would be invaluable as a guide to the adoption of fresh methods of reforming the young criminal. As we have seen, there is room for a greater diversity of ameliorative methods.

The probation officer, as a public official, is not, perhaps, an institution adapted to London, though many of his functions are worthily carried out by the police-

court missionary. But the system of probation is not inapplicable to London. The power which magistrates possess of binding over an offender to come up for judgment when called upon contains some of the elements of the system. Day industrial schools provide something like probation. It will be remembered that these are schools to which children exposed to criminal influences may be committed and where they are detained in the daytime, while they go home at night. There are no such schools for children actually convicted of crime. It can hardly be doubted that committal to such a school would fully meet the case of many a boy who must now be "bound over," fined, whipped, or sent to a reformatory or prison.

So far we have only considered the case of those who are children in the eyes of the law, to secure whom from a life of crime the law has made provision essentially sound, though open to improvement in detail; but there is a more serious matter beyond all this. The British public have demanded that the criminal under sixteen shall be freed from the "prison taint," and imprisonment preliminary to detention in a reformatory has been abolished. They have secured, in London, special homes for him when on remand, and they demur to his confinement in a police cell even for one night. The British public are right, but, as usual, while straining at gnats they are engaged in swallowing camels with most exuberant humps. The number of lads between the

ages of sixteen and twenty-one committed to prison in the course of the year 1902 was 15,672, or about 9 per cent. of the prison population for the year. This is a decrease from the proportion in earlier years. Listen to the comments of the editor of the *Judicial Statistics* upon the subject. "A large part," he says, "of the decrease of offenders at this age—a class most susceptible for good or evil to influences of training or environment—is probably a result of the work of the reformatory and industrial schools. These institutions remove from dangerous surroundings and supply industrial training to children who have committed offences or who are likely to sink into crime, and in this way doubtless cut off part of the raw material from which adult criminals are manufactured."

"A class most susceptible for good or evil to influences of training or environment." It is as true a statement as ever was penned. Any man who has not forgotten his youth must burn at the thought of lads of sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen subjected to the environment of the prison, a place necessarily administered to meet the case of those who are, in fact as well as in name, adults. The average London boy of sixteen is in a position to earn a living. It is very probable that he is not wanted at home except for the sake of such portion of his earnings as he can spare. It is likely enough that the family is so large that his home is overcrowded. He wishes to be independent, and he leaves home. Where

is he to go? He may take lodgings; he may go to the common lodging-house. In the latter event he meets with temptations enough to crime. The youthful recruit is gladly welcomed by the habitual criminal, and the common lodging-house is the place where he seeks him. And London is not even yet a place where crime hides its head abashed. It contains 991 persons at large who are known to engage habitually in crime as their means, or part of their means, of livelihood. It rejoices also in 113 houses of receivers of stolen goods, and in 99 public-houses, 20 beershops, and 45 other houses "frequented by thieves." Moreover, it is not only deliberate crime which leads to imprisonment. The high spirits and the sense of irresponsibility proper to immaturity lead youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one to indulge in various eccentricities, which newspapers group together under the heading of Hooliganism, and for which magistrates consider the appropriate penalty is a fine. But if the culprit's means do not "run to" the amount of the fine, imprisonment is the alternative, and so the downward career is confirmed. The value of reformative treatment for adults in prison is an open question. Elmira and its methods have not yet established themselves as a success. But even a man cursed with a legal mind, and therefore bound to admit that a boy of sixteen is an adult, will concede that there is hope of reformation for the criminal who has not yet reached maturity. The experiment might at least be

tried of establishing a senior reformatory (or junior prison), under State or public control, for London criminals between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. The period of detention need not be of great length, and the training might, for the most part, be such as to enable the boys to follow more efficiently the occupations on which they had been previously engaged. Incidentally such a reformatory might serve as a useful outlet to boys found "incorrigible" in other reformatories, who must otherwise go to prison.

The boy is father of the man. Surely it is worth while to expend much trouble on the boy in order that the offspring may not be an habitual criminal. It is generally admitted that the habitual offender offers one of the most difficult of the problems of modern life, and the authorities are agreed that the experiment should be tried of subjecting him to a lengthened period of reformatory treatment. This is practically an admission that the short sentence has failed in his case. Statistics show that the percentage of the previously convicted among persons committed to prison during the ten years 1893 to 1902 averaged 56·87 annually. The editor of the *Judicial Statistics* is unable to say whether there has been an increase of habitual offenders during the period "(a) because the means of identification of old offenders have of late greatly increased, and (b) because with short sentences the same offender is enabled to repeat his crime, and may figure

twice or oftener in returns in which he would with long sentences have appeared only once." "All that can be said with certainty," he adds, "is that the proportion of persons *known* to be recidivists steadily increases." Further, it appears from the statistics that out of a total of 171,088 convicted persons received in prison in 1902, as many as 11,446 had been convicted twenty times or more. It is well that the State should take in hand the cure of habitual criminals, but it would be much better to check their development. Those who know the habitual criminal are agreed that he enters on his career at an early age. Reformatory and industrial schools have done much to prevent the early development of criminal habits, but nothing is done for the improvement of immature criminals who are first found out after the age of sixteen. It is for this class almost more than for the younger that reformatory treatment is urgently required. It is true that there are those who say that reformatory treatment is not suited to elder boys, and they point to the fact that the Legislature in 1893 prohibited retention in reformatories beyond the age of nineteen as evidence that they are right. The argument is really valueless. Parliament only decided that no boy should be detained in a reformatory as at present constituted beyond the age of nineteen. Previously twenty-one was the maximum age, and the reasons for the alteration are obvious enough when it is remembered that any boy attaining the age of nineteen in a reforma-

tory must have spent at least three years there, and that the reformatory contains boys as young as fourteen years of age. It is hardly too much to say that the present system encourages the growth of habitual criminals. Most persons would consider it a paradox to assert that imprisonment is a greater evil for a boy of sixteen than for one of twelve, but it is strictly true. The boy of twelve on his discharge returns to school, and his record may be good when the time arrives for him to earn his living. The boy of sixteen goes out to find, in all probability, that imprisonment has destroyed his chances of obtaining employment. It is little wonder if he takes to crime as a profession. The fallacious idea that one must live has not yet been eradicated by the philosophers who do not see the necessity.

**NOTE.**—A distinct advance towards the adoption of the probation system is made in the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904. Section 9 of that Act enables the Court to deal with any child qualified for committal to an industrial school by committing him to the custody of a relation or person named by the Court instead of sending him to an industrial school.



## BOYS' CLUBS

By W. J. BRAITHWAITE

**“BOYS' CLUBS!”** The name seems to imply radical self-contradiction—youth and independence, freedom and the need for despotism. The word suggests equality. But who that knows boys—especially city boys—would not recognise that they need external discipline and control? A “club” implies self-centred democracy. Boys are indeed self-centred; their interests and ideas are narrow. But this is not the basis of a true democracy, this is the very reason why boys need guidance by others. We hear in America of boys' clubs which exist on “purely democratic” lines, and are told that complete self-management by the boys is the secret of success in that country. In England our young men are not yet, upon the whole, quite so precocious. It may be feared, however, that in some clubs we too are not ignorant of a democracy of an even more modern kind; the democracy under which, as in the modern state, the “masses,” or the boys, call the tune, while the “classes,” or the managers, pay the piper. Both in club and state such a topsy-turveydom happens easily enough, but in neither does it afford good ground for the development of character, and we may hope that in neither is it

more than a passing phase. The object of this paper is to discuss both the ideals and the achievements of boys' clubs as they exist to-day amongst us, in the hope that such discussions may prove of some use or interest—at least, to those who have no experience of the subject.

## I

## EXISTING AGENCIES

To clear the ground I may give first a bare classification of the agencies which at present exist for work amongst boys—a list which I expect is only made exhaustive by the addition “etc.” There are—

1. Polytechnics, Evening Schools, Classes, etc.
2. Boys' Brigades, Church Lads' Brigades, etc.
3. Refuge Homes, Labour Homes, Shoeblack Societies, Residential Clubs, etc.
4. Missions.
5. Clubs.

We are not concerned with all of these, although the term “club” as used in this classification certainly has a more narrow or restricted meaning than will be given to it in this paper. Standing thus by itself it suggests the club in its most undeveloped form—a place to which casual boys are tempted to come by the amusements supplied, often free, always below cost price, for their

more or less ungracious acceptance. This, perhaps, is after all the generic or root idea of all boys' clubs. The boys have somehow or other to be "attracted" to the place. A difference arises in the object for which the snare is laid, often well in the sight of the artful quarry. Thus, a parish room lent once or twice a week for bagatelle for boys is termed a club. The boys are supposed to show their gratitude by attending church or a Bible-class—a form of return which, if young enough, they feel it below their dignity to resent. Or a room and games may be lent just to "keep boys out of mischief," a form of philanthropy without effort which will also meet its reward. But such primitive arrangements hardly come up to the least which is now implied by the use of the term "boys' club." There must at least be a manager present to take an interest in the boys. There must at least be an effort to organise amusements. There must at least be some educational work, provided the term is used in a very wide sense. In fact, there must be some element of order or discipline to contrast in the club with the undisciplined licence of the street. Turned adrift as boys are in our cities at an early age, self-supporting and family breadwinners at the age of fourteen, with the (imitation) habits of men, but with characters still unformed and with an excitability and quickness all their own, they may be difficult to control and teach; but a boys' club does not deserve the name which does not somehow or other attempt the task. I

do not wish by this to imply that the club idea, as it may be called, of equality and friendship is not itself most valuable for the success and usefulness of boys' clubs, but only that it is not by itself enough. Sufficient attention is not given in all clubs to the other elements of success, which may be called the educational, and for this reason I shall first say something about the agencies which make discipline and education their main objects.

## II

## EVENING SCHOOLS

First, then, we have the organised public machinery of the State or local authority in the evening continuation schools. It is difficult to speak justly (and shortly) of the work which these schools have done, and I shall have more to say later of the work which they might do. They have the advantage of unlimited financial means, splendid buildings, and an experienced as well as in very many cases keen and devoted staff of teachers. Yet from the nature of the case they can only touch a small percentage of the boys who most need help. Boys, of whatever class, who have once left school do not want to go to school again unless it be to learn some immediately useful subject. Thus, would-be clerks will learn shorthand or book-keeping, or a squad of police will do ambulance. For the rest, if an evening school

is to attract working boys, it must organise some class for which they care,—speaking generally, carpentry, metal work, etc., and especially gymnastics. Even so only a small proportion of the population between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one will be found in evening schools, in spite of the seventy-six separate subjects which are taught therein. And of the small proportion, the class of boy attracted and retained in the school is not to a large extent the class which most needs discipline and teaching of the simple and quite elementary kind in which our working boys are still very deficient. The following figures from the Report of the Evening Continuation Schools Committee (1902-3) are intended to illustrate these remarks :—

Number of pupils (male and female) admitted	126,753
Average number on the rolls . . .	76,182
Average number present at all . . .	57,800
Population between ages of fifteen and twenty-one . . . . .	536,912

Many of those admitted, and still more of the regular attenders, would be above the age of twenty-one, and we should not therefore be outside the mark in saying, on the strength of these figures, that out of the rising generation between fifteen and twenty-one, one in ten only attended a public evening school in the winter of 1902-3. But the test of average attendance or of the number admitted is not after all a good test of the work done.

For this we must look to the report of the numbers who completed fourteen hours' attendance at a subject, the test laid down by the Education Office as the minimum qualification for a grant. The following figures give the numbers for the nine most popular subjects :—

Shorthand . .	16,082 out of 28,729 admitted *
Gymnastics . .	10,207 " 20,343 "
Needlework . .	8,406 " 15,286 "
Book-keeping. .	8,142 " 16,554 "
Vocal music . .	6,515 " 14,590 "
French . .	4,947 " 10,488 "
Woodwork . .	4,938 " 11,130 "
Reading and writing	4,284 " 10,915 "
Arithmetic . .	3,799 " 11,225 "

The place of arithmetic in this list is especially significant to anyone who is acquainted with the dense ignorance of the use of this subject on the part of the average London boy, whilst the fact that shorthand heads the list shows the kind of work which is being done best in the evening schools. I do not wish to use these figures to disparage the work of the schools. They show, especially when compared with previous years, how much has been accomplished. They also show how much remains to be done. They certainly confirm a conclusion, which is often forced upon the casual visitor of evening schools or suggested by a perusal of time-tables, namely, that the schools on the whole draw upon

\* Excluding those who attended for one evening only.

the better class of boy (and girl). Teachers are hardly to blame for the result. Their employment depends on the number of pupils retained on the books—a sound enough general principle of administration—and in self-protection they have to do everything they can to get a regular class of member. This process drives out the irregular or lower classes. I shall make a few suggestions later with regard to those schools (and they are not few) where an effort is made to help these classes, who have not sufficient intelligence or character to help themselves.

## III

## BOYS' BRIGADES

Next we come to what is perhaps the most generally known and widely distributed form of boys' club—the Boys' Brigade. It is certainly—to speak without disparagement of its neat “turn-out” and its many admirable and vigorous bands—the most in evidence in the eyes and ears of the public. The term as commonly used includes organisations which are in some respects different in constitution—the Boys' Brigade proper, the Church Lads' Brigade, the London Diocesan Brigade, the Jewish Lads' Brigade, and smaller bodies. It is not necessary here to stay to discuss the differences between these organisations, differences which are mainly matters of

esoteric importance. The Brigades all have the same common object—to bring up the boys to be God-fearing, self-respecting men. They are all distinguished by adopting the same means, a combination of religious instruction with a military discipline and constitution. The idea of this combination is a simple one. Boys like playing at being soldiers, as young boys, and as growing lads the same idea may still appeal to them. The boys, it is hoped, will thus willingly submit to discipline, and the spirit of order which is thus invoked will be enlisted for the boys' own highest good.

“Call these boys ‘boys,’ which they are, and ask them to sit up in a Sunday class, and no power on earth will make them do it; but put a fivepenny cap on them and call them soldiers, which they are not, and you can order them about till midnight.”\*

Boys' Brigades, of course, like boys' clubs, exist in every stage of development. At one end of the scale there is the chapel or parish church company—of the casual type—which meets, or does not meet, once or twice during the week for drill, and on Sunday for Bible-class or service. This is the modern substitute for the old parish club of the like casual description. No doubt it is an improvement. The boys are, to some

\* Professor H. Drummond, quoted by Mr. B. Paul Neuman in his book on *The Boys' Club*. I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to Mr. Neuman for the many admirable suggestions and criticisms in this book.



extent, brought under discipline and control. The pity is that there are so many church or chapel organisations, besides Boys' Brigade companies of the kind we have in mind, against which the charge of want of thoroughness (to whatever the want may be due) may too truly be brought. At the other end of the scale, far removed from these companies, stand the few fully developed Boys' Brigade companies, which are also boys' school, boys' club, boys' home, boys' everything. But, after all, most things are not in the extremes, and most Boys' Brigade companies exist in the mean with the usual ups and downs common to all clubs. As such they are faced with all the old difficulties common to all local organisations—lack of proper premises, of financial means, of personal supporters. Thus, a band, full of enthusiasm, dumped into a room next to a Bible-class may be told to "make a noise quietly," or a company meeting for drill may find itself displaced by a loan club or a choir practice. The personal difficulty, too, is apt to become very acute with companies which can only draw on a small district, for in no district will there be found many enthusiasts both qualified and willing to teach the Red Book and the Bible to the same set of boys. The financial difficulty is "chronic" with all clubs—in both the West and East End meaning of the word. Remembering these difficulties, how much are we to look to the Boys' Brigade movement to accomplish?

First, we must not forget that the main, or at any rate,

the original object of the Boys' Brigade movement is religion, and religion sometimes in perhaps a rather narrow sense. But combined with religion, and side by side with it, there stands "military drill," also, perhaps, a somewhat narrow conception. Now, there is no avoiding the fact, that there is some inconsistency between these two ideas in their narrower forms, and this inconsistency makes the ideal of the company very difficult of attainment. In the ideal the company-captain would combine, and has been known in a few instances to combine, in himself the necessary genuine devotion to drill with that serious religious spirit which makes a direct appeal to boys. In the real the two functions may be more or less unhappily separated. The captain who undertakes the drill may decline to interfere in the religion, and the clergyman or some other "outsider" may be specially imported for the purpose. Or, again, the captain may care too much about the religion and too little about the drill—with results not quite harmonious to either! And thus we see in fact that the fate of the smaller companies of the Boys' Brigade depends almost entirely on the character of the captain, and it is true, I think, that the future of the whole movement in the same way depends upon which of the two ideals mentioned is ultimately to preponderate in the management of Boys' Brigades. Is the movement to remain religious only in the narrow sense of the word, or is the development of the whole of the

lay side of Boys' Brigades to be allowed to proceed unchecked?

Some supporters of the movement, who have been too much hampered by the religious idea, argue with much vigour that it should be enough for Boys' Brigades to teach boys "not to talk filth, and to wash behind the ears," and that the Brigades should not remain specifically religious bodies. Upon this view the Brigades would fulfil their purpose by developing into "cadet corps." Such a development is also directed to meet the common objections to Boys' Brigades that the boys are only taught to play at being soldiers; that the whole system is founded on pretence, and that shams are bad for boys and men alike. There seems indeed, at first sight, to be only one other way of meeting the objection, and that is to drop the drill altogether. But as soon as we mention this alternative we see that the objectors ignore the very real function for which the drill is introduced. The drill is not taught for its own sake, but for the sake of discipline; Boys' Brigades should not be military, but educational institutions. Moreover, if we look at the successful companies we see how the apparent difficulty is solved. Indeed, it is not only the fully successful company, but every company, which makes an effort, that outgrows the difficulty and starts upon the road to success. All these companies are characterised in one way; they have set to work to introduce into their programme other interests besides the religion and the drill,

though these still remain as the skeleton, as it were, of the movement. This skeleton it is found needs flesh and blood. A Boys' Brigade must now have its gymnasium, games, sports, classes—in fact, it must do all it can to be a boys' club. Boys' nature is wider, or narrower if you will, than mere religion and drill, and so we see that nearly all Boys' Brigades which have wished to make their work successful have added many attractions which were not originally thought of as necessary. And as they do so in each case the difficulty with regard to the conjunction of religion and drill is solved, or rather disappears and is not thought of. Religion, it is remembered, is not a thing to be continually forced upon boys, and drill falls into its proper place as the means of teaching discipline to a club.

If these remarks are true, they are a truth now well founded upon experience. Boys' Brigades have already moved far along the lines indicated. A company of the "casual type" above mentioned is not to be taken as representative of Boys' Brigades. The representative company is rather one which meets on three or four nights in the week, besides Sunday, and which offers the attractions of drill, a band, gymnastics, football, and a clubroom with games, and it may be one or two classes of a simple kind. The representative company is, in short, already a boys' club, and for this reason it falls under review in this paper in the discussion of boys' clubs.

## IV

## CLUBS

We come, then, to clubs properly so called, for it is not intended in this paper to discuss refuge homes, labour homes, missions, etc., and my first business must be to give a working definition of the term. I shall use the term in the comparatively narrow sense of the organised boys' club, with regular premises, management, and programme. Of such it has been estimated that there are about fifty in London; but this number will be considerably contracted or expanded according to the amount of elasticity given to the terms of the definition. The definition, however, rules out many of the most useful agencies, such as the ubiquitous parish or chapel clubs. Such clubs are to be numbered by thousands in London, and by scores in each district. They are everywhere in competition with each other and with the organised clubs in the usual English way—Church *v.* Chapel, voluntary institutions *v.* public authorities. This competition also does not always take a very healthy turn, especially when it is rather a competition *for* members than a competition *between* the clubs. When competition takes this form it may do a good deal to weaken the independence of boys and encourage the art of "cadging." As far as the question affects the details of club management, I shall have to refer to it incidentally in the following

pages, and I can only now express a vague hope that the general question of a uniform policy between clubs may some day be taken in hand by some central authority.\*

Speaking, then, of organised clubs, the first question which meets us is one which must be asked by anyone who wishes to start a boys' club, namely, how should members be recruited? by what boys is the club to be used? We may assume for the moment that the club will have a programme which attracts boys; but what boys, and how many, are to be attracted? To deal with the latter point first. The question is one of efficiency. How many boys can really be looked after in the club? This depends on the size of the premises, the number of active managers, the age limit of the club. In any case, if a club is only starting work, the members can hardly be too small. A foundation must be surely laid, and the *esprit de corps*, which is one of the first requisites of a good club, cannot be obtained at once in a casual collection of boys from the street. Then the capacity for work on the part of the managers is limited. It should, of course, be the object of the club managers to have the premises open every night of the week, and one manager at the very least should be present whenever the club is open. Games have to be organised. Classes

\* The work of organising clubs has been taken in hand by the Twentieth Century League (offices, 28, Victoria Street), whose first annual report (1903) gives the statistics of existing clubs and a short account of their needs.

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have to be taken. Missing boys have to be looked up, and each boy to be known personally by the managers. Moreover, boys are by nature clannish, and the spirit of the clan is not very comprehensive. The successful club must make use of this spirit, which otherwise finds its expression in the street "clique" or "gang."

When all these considerations are borne in mind it will be evident that the numbers of even an old-established club must be limited, and if we take the experience of London clubs we see that very few have more than 200 members, that many of the most successful clubs have only 150 or 100 members, and that in most cases the number is even below the latter figure. Mr. Neuman in his book suggests the restriction of membership to 40 seniors and 40 juniors as the numbers best suited to effective work. The numbers are those of what may be called the "one-man" club—the club for which one manager makes himself mainly or entirely responsible, and this club is the commonest type in London. Of course, a club blessed with extensive premises and a large number of regular workers may undertake greater things. Thus the Webbe Institute, with Oxford House and Mr. Douglas Eyre behind it, has over 300 members, all of the working-lad type, and in Manchester we hear of clubs with a membership roll of 2,000 or 3,000. It is obvious that the methods and ideals of such clubs must be very different from those of the smaller personal clubs, and it may perhaps be permitted for a stranger to

doubt whether, when a club has once grown to exceed (say) 100 members, it can any longer be made a real home for the boys, and whether the individual is not then lost in the crowd. The question must be left to the genius of managers, with this caution, that numbers cannot be too small at starting, and that it is far better to limit numbers, and do definite and good work, than merely to provide a crowded and noisy alternative for the street.

Next, as to *what* boys should be admitted. This will depend to a certain extent upon the objects of the founders of the club. The club may be started in connection with a church, or a chapel, or a mission, or a school. With the organised clubs it is the general rule to find that all boys (who do not look too respectable) are admitted, or at least all boys from a fairly wide district, and the main question which arises, where this is the case, is the question of the age of admittance. It has been urged that boys who have left school for more than a year or six months should not be admitted. Some exceptions to the rule are necessary for cases of removals and of boys who have late work, and in any case the limitation of six months is rather narrow. The mention of it here may be used to illustrate the advantages of following Mulvaney's advice and catching the boys young. It is dangerous for the club and the boys that many of them should have tasted too much of freedom, however natural it may be for a boy just out of school



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not to desire to again come under any discipline. There are strong reasons, therefore, in favour of an age limit of (say) fifteen. Some such limit, with necessary exceptions, is required in the interest of discipline, in the interest of education, if the club is to do (as it should) educational work, and in the interest of that class solidarity which clubs can do so much to promote. If boys are taken later, they have already settled, or are settling, into different grades and classes, each of which is suspicious of the other. But if boys are taken as nearly as may be straight from school, or while still at school, class feeling has not had time to develop among them; the boys will grow up in the club together; the future "Tenpenny Tom" may maintain an affection for "Sixpenny Sam." Both may even continue on good terms with their fellow, the clerk or the shop assistant.

And this brings me to another remark which I desire to make on this part of the subject. We hear of rough lads' clubs, etc., and of the mighty efforts needed to carry them on. The idea of a rough lads' club seems to be that none but roughs should be admitted. The danger of such a club is that it may remain rough. Its object, surely, as that of every club should be, is to become respectable, and cease to be a rough lads' club. When it has done this a fresh rough lads' club must be started somewhere else, and the process repeated. It is obvious that no such idea as this can be taken as the basis of an organised club which wishes to be a perma-

nent institution, and if a club is successful in its district no limitation of its numbers to "roughs" should be necessary. It should be the mission of boys' clubs to prevent the growth of the rough lad or the Hooligan gang, and this can best be done by subjecting the embryo Hooligan at an early age, with boys of other classes, to the discipline of the club. It is true that a working lads' club may become "too respectable"; but is this a reason for excluding respectability? A club should be representative of the boys, not the roughs, of the district. It will not do the best work if it is confined to the lowest class.

In this connection, perhaps, the too general policy, already mentioned, of admitting boys to a club "from anywhere" may also be questioned. Would it not be well for the organised clubs, besides imposing a limit of age, to confine themselves much more than they do at present to a particular area, or street, or school? In most parts of London there are boundaries which are already rallying cries for boys, and even the Hooligans have their special street or area. This "local feeling" should be used for club purposes. Local patriotism, though no doubt philosophically narrow, is the seed of many wider virtues, and too many disintegrating forces are already at work for the social worker to be free from blame, if he adds another to the number. It must be remembered, also, that the general adoption of a restrictive policy would have another great advantage.

At present there is a great amount of overlapping and competition of the worst kind between all clubs. One club supplies cheap railway tickets for football; another clothes free or nearly free; the School Board gives free classes and free swimming; the club next door a free or nearly free summer excursion. The whole standard of independence amongst the boys is forced down by such a policy, for the example of one club is made a law for its neighbour. And this evil is increased by the fact that the boys are free to choose between clubs in far too large an area, bad though such choice is both for the boy and for the solidarity of the clubs. And as a last argument in favour of a restrictive policy, if the club is a local institution the question of the increase of membership—which has already been discussed—will present far less difficulty. The number of the boys to be dealt with in the district chosen will be a known quantity, and the club or clubs in the district can be organised to meet definite requirements, and to undertake definite tasks. A cut-the-price competition between clubs is anything but desirable, while a competition in efficiency between local institutions would work only for good.

As to the age limit of leaving the club something must be said. 'The Boys' Brigades generally adopt a fixed age limit—seventeen or eighteen years. At this age the boys have to leave to make room for younger members. It is true that at all costs room must be found for the rising generation, but I cannot but very

strongly question the wisdom of a policy which cuts so-called "old" boys adrift at this age. It is argued that if a boy has been a member of a brigade or club for six or seven years (ten to seventeen), all has been done for him that a club can do. But if we put this argument in its converse form, we shall see its fallacy. Thus stated, the argument is: If a club can do nothing for a boy in the six years up to seventeen, it will do nothing by keeping him for a longer period: and this argument clearly assumes too little. The club, we may hope, *has* done something, and it is the duty of the club to see that that something is not thrown away in the dangerous years which follow. Most clubs in some way recognise this responsibility, but the question of premises is here found to be a very pressing difficulty. In some clubs a separate room is provided for seniors, and the seniors' room in turn develops into a seniors' club. In others boys and old boys, now men, continue to mix on terms of equality. Marriage, removals, and other causes take the old boys away, and the clubs rub along without imposing any age limit for leaving. The successful club, however, seems bound sooner or later to attempt to provide for its "old boys" separately. The material is too good to be allowed to drift away. It is just the material for a successful men's club on decent lines. Anyone who will read Mr. Booth's book (last volume) may be convinced of the need of such clubs, and that they are not already general must be ascribed to the fact

that the boys' club movement is still in its infancy. As more clubs reach maturity, the need for a special effort to create men's clubs, which shall not be mere drinking or gambling clubs, will again come before the public. The material for the success of that movement is now being prepared.

## V

## MANAGEMENT

It is, I fear, useless to say anything about premises. The difficulty has been mentioned just above. Clubs must e'en take what the energy or financial means of their supporters can secure, cutting their coat according to their cloth. Thus, if one were to dogmatise, it might seem that one large hall or room is a necessity for a club, were it not that successful clubs exist in small cottages. One remark may, however, be made in passing, namely, that clubs might generally well spend a little money—and a little is enough—on paper, paint, and pictures. These simple requisites may do much at a small cost to make the dingiest premises attractive. Assuming, then, that premises have been secured, let us turn to the internal arrangements of a club, of which I propose to deal under the heads: Games, Education and Religion, Management and Finance. I shall take these in the order named.

## GAMES

To a casual visitor, games, coupled with a voluntary service on Sunday duly advertised, might seem the be all and end all of a boys' club. This is often made a reproach to clubs, and it is difficult not to think that there is some truth in the apparent conclusion. We hear much of the discipline of games, but what discipline is there in billiards or bagatelle, which are public-house games, or even in many of the infinite variety of the smaller games which flourish in a boys' club? It is fair, however, to remember that it is the games in the club which attract the boys, though perhaps games alone will not keep them. Games must, therefore, be provided, and in as great a variety as possible. They are commonly divided into "indoor" and "outdoor." For a club this classification is not satisfactory, but I will say a few words on the subject under the heads:—

1. Games.—(a) quiet; (b) noisy.
2. Sports.—(a) indoor; (b) outdoor.

I (a). *Quiet games* do not flourish, except in very well-established clubs, as much as might be desired. I include in the term chess, draughts, dominoes, halma, and all the novelties in this line of every season. There is a fashion in these things, and the games are played more at some times than others; but it is a mistake to think that more than a small portion of "working" boys

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will be anxious to spend their evenings quietly at them. Two or three propositions, however, may be laid down with regard to these games, as established by common experience. A quiet room should be provided. Someone should be present to teach and play the games. Competitions in the club and with other clubs should be periodically organised.\* And lastly, any novelties, and novelties are constantly coming out, should be introduced at as early a date as possible.

I (b). *Noisy games* are the successful ones. These are bagatelle, cannon billiards, quoits, darts, etc. The organisation of these games causes little difficulty. It is common for one of the older boys to be put in charge of the billiards and bagatelle, and a fee of a penny or halfpenny a game is also usual. It is objected that this throws the games into the hands of the club "pluto-crats," but against this we may set the facts that the numbers who can play at these games in most clubs is limited, especially if there be only one or two tables, that the boys quite understand the charge (which is a usual one in clubs), and that it is not after all very desirable to encourage these games, especially as they are already popular enough and flourish mainly elsewhere in the public-house.

*Sports*.—It is on the sports, outdoor and in, that the

\* For the affiliated clubs this is done in London by the Federation of Working Boys' Clubs.

interest of boys' clubs is mainly concentrated. These are gymnastics, physical drill, boxing, and singlestick for the hall (if the club has one), hockey or fives if a yard admits, harriers for the streets, and football and cricket for the fields, if indeed anything worthy of the name is accessible. All these require control and instruction, and if properly played have educative value. It is generally agreed that the instruction should be the best possible, and we should all recognise that good instruction sets a standard which makes the game valuable.

I cannot, however, neglect this opportunity of calling attention to the terrible material handicaps under which the outdoor games are played in the East End. The grounds are too far distant, and the space available inadequate. Further, the state of the turf on some of the biggest playgrounds is such as to make a "good game" either at cricket or football almost unplayable. It is heart-breaking to go over to Wanstead Flats or "the Marshes" on a winter afternoon with a club football team that would be keen if it had a chance. The boys get off work at irregular times from varying distances, and it is good luck if both teams have assembled by 3.30 to commence in winter a half-hour's game in semi-darkness on a dismal swamp miscalled a football pitch. I do not want to say anything to discourage the efforts of the London County Council on the London Playing Fields Committee to supply accommodation,



indeed, I am sure that if the public only realised how inadequate is the accommodation which can with existing means be provided for games in the East End (we see a lot in print about our national pastimes!), more means would be forthcoming to assist their efforts. I know that with money a good ground can—even under existing circumstances—be hired, but small boys' clubs generally as opposed to the organised clubs cannot meet the charges made, even if the ground is within reach of the club in mere point of time. What the grounds are like in other districts I do not know from experience, but till something is done to improve material conditions in the East of London, it will only be the comparatively rich organisations that will be able to play the games under passable conditions, and till something very stringent is done to improve and cheapen means of transit in London generally, most of our boys must remain strangers to playing fields.

To resume, however, the spirit in which games are played is after all more important than the standard of excellence reached. For gymnastics an instructor is necessary, and indeed gymnastics belong rather to the subject of education. For cricket one of the managers or some friend of the club will be found to act as captain. The difficulty here is want of practice. A yard may be used in summer, and for winter Mr. Neuman's club has devised, and he recommends, a system of nets in the club hall. For football managers

may feel themselves rather big or stiff, but there is room for someone as president of the club and referee, whilst one of the boys acts as captain. Teams of boys continue to want both supervision and support, and the game will not be played with any the less spirit, if the club managers let it be felt that the club's reputation for behaviour as well as success in the game is at stake.\* Football is the boys' sport above all others. Every club will muster one or several teams, and in spite of all difficulties the game will be played with a keenness worthy of the greatest "public school." Football "pros" are the errand-boy's heroes, and by parity of reasoning the football team should be the backbone of the club.

Perhaps it may be as well to deal here at once with the financial aspect of games. Games played by small boys cannot be made self-supporting. The boys have other club expenses, and 1*d.* or 2*d.* a week will be the most which they can afford as a subscription to a football team. Besides this, the game entails other expenses—an assisted railway ticket at 2*d.* or 3*d.* (for which the club may have to pay 5*d.*), the boys' outfit, which they should certainly provide for themselves (though the

\* There is a great need in the East End for an impartial body of referees for *all* the football played. The spirit of professionalism has spoilt the game. Every referee is a possible enemy with money, or something, to lose by giving just decisions. Could not the secretaries of the various leagues unite to form a committee to invite old public school boys to volunteer to referee on Saturdays throughout the winter?

club may be able to obtain and sell boots, shirts, etc., at wholesale prices), the cost of the ground, of which I have already spoken, and the implements of the game. The boys naturally also want to keep a few pence for pocket-money to spend in refreshments. When these items are taken together it will be seen that the working boy can only play football or cricket at a cost of 8d. to 9d. a week (2d. sub., 2d. ticket, 3d. for clothes, 2d. refreshments). I must refer to other essays in this book to support the assertion that the amount here allowed for subscription is the *outside* of what a boy should be asked or expected to spend. Indeed, it is too much for the small boys, in whose favour a reduction of the charges may be necessary. It is not enough, however, for the expenses of the game, and the balance must necessarily be made up from the club finances. If the impatient reader here mutters "pauperisation," I must ask him to wait to the end of this essay.

One last word before I pass from the subject of games. Care should be taken that every boy as far as possible has a chance of doing something in a club. Games simply will not attract all boys. Neglect of this caution is responsible for a large part of the failure of clubs. It is true that most clubs have two or more football teams, each consisting of (say) fifteen members, and that all the boys do not get away from work in time on Saturday to be able to play. But the club should be many-sided enough to provide for those boys,

as well as those who do not care or cannot afford to play. It is too usual, for instance, to find that a club is shut on Saturday night, in many ways the worst night of the week, and the night on which especially all the boys should have some place to go to. And, generally, throughout the week the club should provide other interests than can be found in games, and this is why education, the term being used in a general sense, forces itself upon us as a necessary part of the developed boys' club.

#### EDUCATION

It is characteristic of the whole subject of boys' clubs that education should thus be relegated to a place behind games. To a certain extent this is inevitable. Games are the first care of a club, because they are the means of getting members. Education, however, properly understood, should be the means of keeping and disciplining them. Under the present voluntary system the whole process is in inverse order, and consequently in danger of going backward. Too many clubs, made up of chance members gathered in by chance, are, and must, perhaps, remain, under the voluntary plan, mere noisy lounges for unruly boys, though even in such clubs it is possible to hope that good work is done by the efforts of managers to instil some elements of order and self-respect into the constantly shifting crowd. The days, however, of compulsory evening schools are

not yet. And in the interval voluntary workers have a splendid chance of hammering out the elements of an after education that shall be of real use to the working boy. . Some clubs already have taken this work in hand, and nearly all organised clubs do some definitely educational work, if it is only a class in wood-carving, or drawing, or vocal music. Mr. Neuman's own club is probably unique in having already systematised a course of education through which boys are required to pass. The details of this course, given in his book, are enough to fill the ordinary worker with admiration and envy, but they also suggest some doubt whether such an elaborate system is possible for the ordinary working-class boy. Indeed, the kind and amount of education to be provided in most clubs depends very much upon the kind of member, and it is impossible as yet to formulate any definite general rules for clubs in the matter. All that I wish in the following pages to suggest is that clubs should definitely undertake some educational work, and create the demand which will make a further supply advisable.

What, however, is meant by education? The word used in connection with boys' clubs must be taken in a wide sense. I should use it to include such things as gymnastics, musical and physical drill, swimming, technical training, ambulance, play-acting—provided always these things are done under competent instruction. All these subjects may not appear at first sight to be of

"real use to the working boy," but they are the more popular subjects, and with competent instruction they would all do something to stimulate intelligence or develop physique. For the latter purpose, gymnastics and physical drill are especially valuable, and they are subjects in which every club ought to be able to attain good results. The competitive instinct may here be made to subserve educational purpose. Already it is the fashion to give displays and hold competitions. More still might be done by these means. Not that competitions do not already exist, but that they are not adapted to every kind of club, or at any rate, sufficient advantage is not taken of them. Thus the boys' brigades have their local drill competition between companies; evening schools have their yearly display in the Albert Hall; there is an excellent competition in musical drill and gymnastics for evening schools in the East End for the Tower Hamlets, and there are the competitions organised by the Federation of Working Lads' Clubs for the federated clubs. There is still room, however, for the local M.P. or philanthropist to give challenge shields for many districts in drill and gymnastics for the many small clubs. The working boy, truth to tell, is a sad pot-hunter. He is also a competitive animal, and we have to appeal to his instincts where they make for his own good.

Passing from gymnastics to the more or less kindred subject of technical training, there is not much to be

said from the point of view of the club. Clubs cannot by themselves undertake much work of this kind. It is true that some clubs (*e.g.* Stepney Jewish) are blessed with a technical workshop on the premises. It is true also that there have been crazes for such things as wood-carving or metal-work—many clubs having classes—but, like all crazes, these have been too much limited to one subject, and boys of different trades or classes cannot be expected to have all the same interest.\* Technical instruction to be useful must be specialised, and in the average London club there will be boys belonging to all sorts of different trades. It is too much to expect a club to provide for all, and there may be no particular local reason for choosing one trade rather than another. And, after all, why should a club wish to do it? Art and technical classes of every kind under the Board, or at a polytechnic, are within reach of every club. Club managers, as they cannot reasonably be expected to provide everything on the premises, should fulfil their proper functions of finding classes of this kind suitable for the different boys, and seeing that the boys attend them.

But to pass to other subjects more strictly educational. A course of ambulance leading up to St. John's certificates for the majority of those attending it may be

\* If a club is to do anything in this way, the old school idea of a carpentering shop seems best adapted to give play to the constructive instinct.

classed as useful and almost necessary to working lads. A similar course in elementary medical knowledge is waiting for development. Then there are book-keeping (which is supposed to be useful) and shorthand, which is useful for a few boys, vocal music (*alias* glee-singing, or in some clubs nigger troupes), and recitation, which is another name for amateur theatricals and the attempt, more or less successful, to give a public club performance of Shakespeare or Sheridan. But the boys do not leave school omniscient in the various subjects there taught, and many of them will not without some inducement return to their old slavery to confess their ignorance. There is, therefore, room in a boys' club to go over again much of the work which is already supposed to be known. The three R's—arithmetic especially—should certainly be taught. There are also the general subjects, history, geography, etc., which are by no means popular, but which (with lantern slides) are a means of communicating wider knowledge of the world. To these drawing may be added as a good and popular subject. The subjects mentioned above are enough to show how much there is to be done, and if only the appalling ignorance of most of the working boys, who have left school and now form the *clientèle* of clubs, were more widely recognised, I am sure that managers would attempt more generally to do something to equip club members with elementary knowledge. The cry for more education is nowhere popular, but this should



not deter clubs from undertaking a duty which they owe to the boys.

No doubt the objection will be raised that this is putting too much upon the club and the boys. Certainly an efficient club cannot be run "on the cheap." It will now also be additionally clear that the reasons for limiting the numbers of a club are very strong. With a crowd of fluctuating members managers cannot possibly see that proper attention is paid to each boy. Classes in most subjects will not be large, and the number of teachers required for anything like an adequate programme is considerable. The question also at once arises of paid as against voluntary teachers. The pros and cons are easily drawn out, but a definite conclusion is not so easily reached. In favour of the paid teacher properly chosen there are experience and efficiency. In favour of the voluntary worker are keenness and a supposed greater interest in the boys. The conclusion is not easily reached, because the competence of the voluntary worker is an unknown quantity. Where a manager can successfully take a class he should do so, if only to show to the boys that he believes in the education provided. As regards the subjects first mentioned, it is fairly common to find one of the club managers doing the gymnastics, and doing them well, and a friendly doctor will be found for the ambulance. But some paid help will be necessary somewhere, and this leads me, after (as I feel) a very perfunctory

discussion of education in the club, the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated, to say a few more words on the relation of clubs to the evening schools.

As I have hinted above, the present system of boys' clubs—though, Heaven knows, the word system is hardly applicable—can probably only be regarded as transitory. Clubs are “threatened,” if you will, by the advent of compulsory evening schools. But should they not do everything they can to hasten this advent? They can do so most efficiently by making education part of the system of the club.

The clubs where this has already been done are too few in number. Clubs hold too often a position of “friendly neutrality” to education, which is really, I had almost said, worse than useless. Managers say, “Of course, we encourage the boys to go to evening classes; but you know they won't do so.” Why should they when the club is open to them next door? Or again, “The boys are of so rough a class that no attempt at classes has any chance of success.” The answer to the latter objection has been indicated above in the discussion of the age of admittance of members. And with regard to the former, if the club is unable to provide education itself—a quite limited attendance at which could be taken as obligatory—why should not the suggestion be adopted that attendance at some neighbouring school (say) one class a week should be made a test of membership? I shall be told that the

boys will not conform to the test, that only the respectable boys would go, and that the whole object of the boys' club—which is to civilise the rough boys—would be lost. It might be sufficient to reply that till the experiment has been tried we cannot be sure of the result; that some clubs even of rough boys have been successful in requiring a limited education; that older boys should not be required to conform to the condition, and that the present system of catering for the rough boy's roughness or unwillingness to learn is not a fair test. But I should like to approach the subject at this point from another side.

I should like first to remind readers that in the London County Council we have now a new educational authority, and an opportunity of making a new and effective start in evening schools from the basis of what has already been accomplished. The departing Board bequeaths to its successor all the material for successful work. The school buildings alone are such as to fill with envy any person who pays a visit to them after having habituated himself to the often somewhat dingy and squalid tenements now used for boys' clubs. Here is a big field for further work. Why should not part of these buildings be turned in the evening into boys' clubs under the new authority? There is generally in a school a hall with gymnastic appliances; there are classrooms easily made clubrooms; for use in summer evenings there is a yard or playground. And at present

the most is not made of these opportunities. Three or perhaps four nights a week the school is open for classes, and the boys of the neighbourhood drift in. It is true that a few lads in every district, who wish to qualify in some way as office-boys or clerks, come for the sake of real work, but if we take a typical poor district in London there are not many boys of this kind. The motives which bring the boys to school, if analysed, would, I think, be found to be very mixed : fancy, lack of other occupation, old association, home influence, the attraction of a gym squad may be mentioned.\* The strongest cause is perhaps the personality of the teacher, and as in many cases the teacher's heart is in his work, we see evening schools doing good work, and the really splendid equipment of the classes is not thrown away. And if we ask further how the success in these cases is reached, we see that it is not by anything which the educational authority has itself provided. The authority has indeed provided the buildings, the money, and the men, but it has not supplied the rest of that which is lacking to make the whole school a living reality for the boys, and from the nature of the case it cannot do so. What is lacking is the idea of the boys' club, and it is this which the keen teachers have set themselves with their limited means and scanty leisure to supply. All over London schools will be found which nominally

\* I knew a tankmaker's "learner" who attended a shorthand class so as to be able to take down music-hall songs !

should open at 7.30 or 8 p.m., open at 7 or before, and the teacher present to organise a few games (at his own expense), and to talk to and get to know the boys. This is the germ of the club idea, strong enough to make success where nothing but failure could otherwise be foreseen. Here it is that men who wish to do some useful work for London boys will have the best chance of making a start on good lines. It is certain that help, personal and financial, will be welcomed by the teachers. Cannot our new authority and managers of evening schools find some way of attracting voluntary workers—and the field is one for voluntary work—into the development of the club idea in evening schools? Let us see for a moment what is involved in the proposal. At present the schools are, in the common case, open three nights a week for classes. The whole cost of this is borne by the rates and the educational grant, and there would be no need (of course!) for the voluntary managers to desire to interfere with this arrangement. They could as members of the Evening School Committee supervise the classes, and, if keen and competent enough, take a class or two themselves so as to come into direct contact with the boys. Their proper functions, however, would be to make a club of the school by throwing the premises open on three of the other nights of the week for boys attending the school. I do not know whether fear of Mr. Cockerton would compel the new authority to make a charge for rent, but in any

case the charge need not be much if calculated according to the old Board's educational scale. A supply of games should be got in. Permission to store a movable bagatelle-table and billiard-table should be obtained. A voluntary instructor, if possible a manager, should take over the gymnastics for advanced work on (say) two of the three nights. Boxing and fencing could be encouraged, and the playground used for hockey and small cricket or football. And all this could be done in the natural centre for such work, which is the school building. The experiment is not altogether a new one, as clubs already exist on the lines indicated; but the creation of a new educational authority gives a splendid chance for an expansion of really useful work of this kind among boys. The scheme has everything to commend it—the interests of education, economy of means, and economy of effort. Once established, it would do much in each district to minimise the present overlapping of boys' clubs, if existing clubs would rally to the standard of increased efficiency thus set up.\* The difficulty of getting boys to attend classes would be minimised, if at the same time classes were thus made general, and the club managers took over the work which now falls upon the teachers of seeing that each boy (as the case might require) either completed his elementary education, which is now so often incomplete, or attended that class which was most

\* Where clubs have their own buildings, the school would not be used on non-class nights.

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likely to be of service to him. The clubs would be relieved of the effort of themselves supplying education for their members, whilst the education supplied would be an added justification for the existence and work of the club.

### RELIGION

I pass to the next point which calls for our attention in the management of a club. What should be the club's attitude towards religion? The answers given by the various existing clubs run through all the conceivable alternatives. I have certainly not the personal experience of each alternative which would enable me to give or attempt to give an authoritative opinion on the subject. And, after all, any such opinion would inevitably depend to a large extent on personal bias. It may be worth while, however, to state shortly what is the practice of clubs, and to make a few remarks on the question as far as possible from the club point of view. To do so in an honest spirit may provoke discussion and lead a little way to clearness of thought, and I feel confident that the number of persons who would undertake boys' club work could be largely increased if it were possible to hit upon a solution of "the religious difficulty." In a club such as we have had in mind, equipped in every way to meet the various needs of the boys, it is evident that a heavy responsibility lies upon managers to use well the influence which they acquire as concerns religion.

As already mentioned, the practice of existing clubs is various. Some clubs make attendance at a Sunday Bible-class or service compulsory on members. This is the case with the parish clubs and Boys' Brigades. Such clubs are happy in having no "religious difficulty," as it is for the sake of the Sunday service or Bible-class that the club exists. From the point of view of the boys, however, the compulsory Sunday attendance is a drag upon the success of the club. That the organised boys' clubs recognise this is shown by the fact that with them the Sunday service is not generally compulsory. The usual plan is to have a voluntary club service either every Sunday or occasionally. Some clubs, however, do not open at all on Sunday for any purpose, the practice of the club being simply to "encourage members to go to church," a phrase usually with a very vague meaning. No doubt there are sound reasons for the very different methods which this review of the practice of clubs displays, both from the point of view of the managers and from that of the boys.

With regard to the latter, it must be frankly recognised at the outset how strong among boys is the prejudice against any profession of religion. Indeed, to a certain extent the prejudice works, as it were, its own fulfilment. The religious boy is called a "saint," and converted by hostility into a "prig." It is true that in the days of their extreme youth and innocence a large proportion of boys may have attended a Sunday-school



or been members of a choir or a Bible-class. Such institutions are of the nature of things into which a boy is born. But if a boy continues in them after the age of (say) sixteen his conduct deserves the close scrutiny of his neighbours. The credit of religion—which throughout remains singularly high—will depend on his conduct. He must be the pattern boy, or the others are quick to say, “Look at him! He’s religious, and this is what he’s done.” Thus a religious boy may reprove others for their language—which is apt among themselves to be bad enough—and absolutely discredit his reproof by failing to give his share to a club subscription for a mate, to which the worst characters had given their last mite. Again, it is wonderful how impervious boys are (and we all were) to religious instruction. It simply runs off them like water off a duck. This is largely owing to the indiscretion of religious people. For instance, two boys go, through the kindness of friends, to some work in the country, and the first night their host gives them a three hours’ talk on religion. What they wanted was a square meal and a sleep, and not a lot of talk which to them sounded mere jargon. “’Ow ’e did talk!” was the only comment which could be extracted from the victims. This attitude towards religion may be lamentable, but it is almost universal. No good, however, will be done by ignoring it, and so it must be mentioned first in the discussion of the Sunday programme of the club.

And from the managers' point of view equally serious difficulties confront us. In the first place, managers as well as other people have a claim to a day off. Then, as Englishmen, they have an innate dislike for preaching or talking about motives. Then there is the "religious difficulty" of present-day thought; managers may belong to different religious denominations or be undenominational. Bearing all these difficulties and objections in mind, is it possible to frame a really useful Sunday programme for the Club?

Some people will be horrified at the very form of the question. The question, they will say, assumes that religion can be made a matter of compromise, that a lowest common denomination of religious belief and practice can be allowed. Against this view I can only appeal to the facts of present-day opinion. The misfortune, if you will, is that so many people nowadays do not hold a dogmatic position; and, after all, persons who do, have surely the least excuse for holding back from social service. It is to the many present-day "undenominationalists" that I wish to address a few remarks on the question of religion in the boys' club, if they make their undenominationalism a reason for not taking up this work.

On one point at the outset I must appeal to the established experience of clubs. If there is to be a serious religion for a club at all, it must be the religion of the person or persons responsible for the club in

other matters. I may refer to the experience especially of the Boys' Brigade—where services are run by the Brigade captain—and the Church Lads' Brigade's companies or club, in cases where the company is run by a layman and the religious exercises by the clergymen. The club manager, who knows the boys, speaks to them with an authority which an outsider cannot possess. In this respect all Church clubs are at present severely handicapped—where the clubs are managed by lay-workers. It is useless to talk of the position of the clergyman to boys who have no reason to recognise that position. It is a violation of common sense that the managers should abdicate their authority just at that point where their authority is most important, and should be most useful. Religion to be real in a club must be part of the life of the club, not a profession imposed on it by the dictates of external authority or convention, or preached to it once a week by a stranger. And so managers must make themselves responsible for the religion. They must not look to the clergy or anyone else, nor must the clergyman, if he is not manager, desire to interfere (except when asked) in the religion of the club.

Now what is the ordinary layman of not very definite theological views to do if he is given or takes this free hand in religion? He does not wish probably to discuss miracles or dogma or the person of Christ. Will it relieve him to know that the boys do not want to do

this either? I cannot think that the answer to other difficulties with regard, at any rate, to the greater part of religious teaching, is any further to seek. Boys, like men, ask, Why is it necessary to be religious to be good? For boys as for men the very form of the question is an inversion which may threaten to lead us from the truth. In fact, if we are to teach religion, we must start from the other end of the problem, and proceed from the study of what is good which we know, to the contemplation of religious perfection. This is to follow the lines of modern educational as much as philosophical theory. It is the process from the known to the unknown. Now the moral sense in boys may be said to develop along certain well-defined lines. They have a sense of honour and justice; they can be taught to be self-respecting and other-respecting—even the street gang depends on a sense of loyalty amongst its members; they can appreciate energy and consistency of character; they recognise the nobility of devotion to an ideal. It is these ideas, as found in our traditional religion, that should be driven home to boys. It is not necessary for a manager, unless he so desires, to involve himself in the mysteries of dogma or miracle. There is plentiful material without this for a Sunday service. And if rigorous religious critics object (as they will) that an undogmatic religion is valueless, we may refer them to the proverb of the half-loaf, and ask whether the great dearth of workers—the “no bread”—from

which we now suffer is not largely due to the religious censorship which is exercised by expressed public opinion in this form over boys' clubs. The ordinary layman may not see eye to eye with the clergy in matters of religious belief, and holds back from helping in parochial or other work because he does not wish to advertise his differences. In some cases already he has claimed and is exercising his freedom. Would it really injure the cause of religion if greater opportunities of freedom were more commonly allowed to him by the Church and Chapel authorities?

In the independent boys' club, then, the religious service will not be, and indeed is not, compulsory. It is not the object of managers to make hypocrites, but men out of the rough material of our streets. We must respect in this the prejudice, which we ourselves share, against the "profession" of religion. On Sunday the club will be open for a simple religious service of the kind indicated, and also (if managers have the time) for quiet games, talk, and amusements. To open the club as on week-days would, in the present state of opinion, alienate public opinion, and to a certain extent create a local scandal, although even such a policy seems better than closing the club altogether.

#### MANAGERS

I come now to an easier subject—the management of the club. Throughout the previous pages the persons

called managers have been frequently mentioned. Who are they? What are their duties and functions? As a rule they are the man and his friends who have undertaken to "run the club." They may or may not have behind them some body of outside support—a church or a chapel, a public school, or a college. It is certain, however, that if the club is to be a success they must have complete control of it in all its details. It is not a case of a man and his work; for a boys' club the work must be the man, it must be the expression of himself. Keeness and knowledge are both necessary. To parody a famous saying, if keeness without knowledge is blind, knowledge without keeness is void. It may be said that the club will in this case make too great a demand upon managers who, after all, in most cases, have professional or other work of their own; but I am sure that my assertion will be borne out by all those who have had experience in clubs. It is not necessary for a would-be manager to undertake at once to work a whole club, but it is necessary that he shall do regularly and thoroughly whatever he undertakes in the club. After all, everyone knows something, and to be successful in a boys' club he should go and teach or do that something with keeness. This is the spirit in which games should be taught (for they want teaching) and classes organised and carried on. I have suggested that managers may take a class in some subject themselves. To do so is a guarantee of good faith

to the boys, and an opportunity to the manager of getting a fairly intimate knowledge of some of the boys. This, indeed, is the other great duty of managers, and one which well repays the doer. The manager should know the boys personally, and every opportunity of doing so must be seized. If he lives, as in some cases, at or near the club, he has great opportunities. But in any case absentees have to be hunted up and talked to. The unruly have to be taken in hand in detail. The backward have to be encouraged. It is by reason of this personal contact that we may trust that the value of the apparently most undisciplined club far exceeds that of the trained discipline or order of the "well-managed" public institution.

#### ORDER

I shall say little on the much-debated question as to the means of maintenance of order in the club. "Other men, other measures." This proverb is particularly true in this connection, but a few remarks as to the means at the disposal of managers may not be out of place. To begin with, it must be admitted that clubs have not a "hold" upon the boys in the same way as a school. The club is a voluntary institution. It is the boy who can show his disapprobation by not coming. To a great extent this is a disadvantage, but from another point of view it is a good, for it *compels* managers to attempt to rule the club by appealing to the better instincts of the

members. A club cannot be ruled by fear, as a school may be. And so in the first rank of the various means of discipline must be put the spirit of persuasion. Of course, some men are blessed with this gift above others. There are managers whose very word with boys is law. But all men can do much by making it a practice to appeal to the boys' spirit of humour. This may be called forth on any public club occasion, as well as individually by private talk with any wrongdoer. These remarks no doubt presuppose that the club is to a certain extent so well established that the boys feel that they owe something to its existence. This, however, is also presupposed by all the other means which are at our disposal. The deprivation of some indulgence or expulsion—the last available punishment—would mean nothing if the offender or his mates did not care for the club. Fines, a very doubtful form of punishment in any case, will not be paid if a boy prefers to stay away. "Corporal punishment," even in the form of an old slipper, can hardly be attempted without the victim's consent, and besides, the boys have been so hardened to the cane or the strap at school and at home that severe punishment of this kind is not to be thought of. The very ineffectiveness, therefore, of the means of repression compels us to depend for success upon the better nature of the boys. It is the strength as well as the weakness of the manager's position.

But besides punishments for the wicked there are



rewards for the virtuous : in other words, prizes, upon which a little may be said. Some persons, forgetting their old schooldays and the tips and pocket-money to which they did not then object, have a wholly unwarrantable prejudice against prizes. Prizes of all sorts are open to the successful man of the world ; why should they not be set before the boy whose outlook as to "consequences" is even more limited than that of the "practical person" who generally makes this objection? It is not as if the prizes that a club can give could pauperise the recipient. A prize worth 5*s.* or 10*s.* means a lot to a boy, and rewards for success in sports or for competitions in games do not do more than stimulate a healthy rivalry. Better prizes for good work in class are almost necessary to stamp good work that a boy has done, and for which the immediate reward is not apparent. And, while the display of money is always odious, managers and boys must sometimes feel the inequality of the distribution of wealth. The manager, if only he could do so without harm, would often help a boy who is out of work or in distress ; but to do so except by way of loan in exceptional circumstances is almost the worst sin he could commit against the club. The boys do not feel that there is any generosity in the existence of the club—much though it may cost—but a few well-chosen prizes will do a good deal to correct this want of feeling, if indeed it is one which needs correction.

It is common in most clubs to have a committee of senior boys. The importance of this committee as a means of democratic government seems to me to be exaggerated. After all, the number of things which can be trusted to a committee of boys is limited. They are useful to act as stewards of game-rooms and as a first check on disorder, to make suggestions, and to voice any club grievances if such exist. The meeting of popular representatives is an old and reputable device for the concealment of an autocracy, but in a boys' club the committee should not be allowed, in imitation of the popular assembly, to usurp the functions of government.

#### FINANCE

I come now to the question of the finance of a boys' club. This may be considered from two sides—from the side of the boys and from that of the managers. To take the former first, one broad principle may be at once laid down, though its application is not so easy. The benefits of a club must not lead to the "pauperisation" of the members. We have touched this question before when dealing with games, and we must deal with it finally now. And indeed we seem at first to be involved in a maze of commonly accepted but contradictory platitudes. On the one hand we are told, and we believe, that "money is not the making of a club"; that "the boy must not be taught to cadge, *i.e.* to try to get something for nothing." On the other hand, we

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have all the maxims of present-day philanthropy, all the easy good nature which finds it difficult to refuse to give. Perhaps it will simplify matters to deal separately at first with the two sides of our clubs' activities, education and amusements, and to see what boys need and how much they can be expected to pay.

1. *Education*.—For elementary subjects classes must either be free or only the most nominal charge must be made. Here, if the club is a separate organisation, it is in competition with the public authority, and under the board classes are free for boys under sixteen, whilst there is a charge of only 1s. for older boys. Boys are quite aware of the charges made at the public school, and the club can only follow without discussing the lead thus set by the public authority. For technical and advanced classes, however, a small charge may be made to cover cost of materials, and even part of this may be remitted for good work and regular attendance. To do this is not to disobey the warning that boys should not get something for nothing. Any charges must, however, be small, as an extra 1d. a week puts a great strain upon boys' resources.

2. *Games*.—I have dealt above with the finance of football and cricket. There is also the usual charge for billiards or bagatelle, which has already been discussed. There remains the question of a club subscription for

the boys' use of the club. This must vary with the nature of the club and the character of the boys. If the club does much educational work it will charge less than if it is wholly devoted to amusements. In the latter case the subscription may run up to 2*d.* a week. In the former it may fall to  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* or almost disappear in a mere registration charge. In practice the collection of a weekly subscription causes some trouble, but meets the hand-to-mouth finance of the London working boy. This trouble, and the trouble caused by arrears, is avoided if a lump sum is charged yearly and quarterly.

One other small but much-discussed point may be mentioned, the question of supplying clothes to the boys for gymnastics and games, or even for ordinary wear. Comparisons on such a subject as this are no doubt invidious. But boys make them very easily and soon find out that free clothes are attainable in a neighbouring street if they are refused at one club. Perhaps the old-fashioned parish clubs are the worst offenders in this respect. Circumstances vary so much that here again it is very hard to lay down a hard-and-fast rule, but I cannot conceive that it is ever right for a club to give wearing clothes, unless in very exceptional circumstances and after inquiry at the home, and to fit a boy out for some application for work. There is less objection to a gymnasium squad being allowed (literally) to win its colours. But if boys cannot be taught to save their pence for an outfit for a game like football, upon which

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they are all so keen, it may well be doubted if the club is serving any useful purpose. No club should be without some arrangement for banking boys' money for these and other purposes.

Passing to the finance of the club from the point of view of the managers, it is evident that the boys' subscriptions will not go far to the upkeep of the club. The cost of the upkeep varies enormously from club to club. I give below Mr. Neuman's estimated balance-sheet.

### *A. Household Expenses :*

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rates and taxes . . .	40	0	0			
Lighting and heating . . .	35	0	0			
Wages of caretaker . . .	15	0	0			
Repairs . . .	10	0	0			
Insurance . . .	3	0	0			
	<hr/>			103	0	0

### *B. Instruction :*

Gymnastics (30 lessons @ 10s. 6d.) . . .	15	15	0			
Cricket coaching—winter . . .	10	0	0			
Fencing and boxing . . .	10	0	0			
Swimming . . .	5	5	0			
Headwork—teachers . . .	20	0	0			
Class materials — science, art, and manual . . .	15	0	0			
	<hr/>			76	0	0

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## 7. Amusements :

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cricket—two teams . . .	30	0	0			
Football „ . . .	10	0	0			
Indoor games . . .	15	0	0			
Gymnasium repairs . . .	5	0	0			
	<hr/>			60	0	0

## 8. Miscellaneous :

Prizes . . . . .	10	0	0			
Libraries, magazines, papers . . .	14	0	0			
Printing . . . . .	7	0	0			
Club festivities . . . . .	5	0	0			
Bathroom expenses . . . . .	4	0	0			
Medicine cupboard . . . . .	1	0	0			
	<hr/>			41	0	0
				£280	0	0
				<hr/>		

From this total a deduction of £30 may fairly be made in respect of the following items :—

	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions (40 Juniors @ 5s.) . . .	10	0	0
„ (40 Seniors @ 7s. 6d.) . . .	15	0	0
Boys' payments for class materials . . .	5	0	0

leaving as the net annual cost of maintenance the sum of £250.

The figures of this balance-sheet will be modified with circumstances. On the one hand, premises may not be freehold, and this means the addition of £100. On the other, if the suggestion made in this paper were allowed and the club were run in a school, about £30

would be enough to cover rent for three nights a week, if rent were charged.

Again, the items under "B" vary much from club to club. Under the "Evening School Scheme" nearly the whole cost would be saved, except the £20 for cricket, fencing, and boxing. These items Mr. Neuman estimates on the assumption that managers would not themselves be able to give "competent" instruction. It is certain that boys will give far more attention to learning boxing or cricket if they are impressed with the fact that they are being taught by professionals, but it ought not to be impossible to find some old public school boy for the purpose.

As regards "C," it will be understood from the foregoing remarks that games cannot be managed for nothing. The cost depends on the situation of the club with regard to the ground, and the cost of the ground. On the assumption, however, that one ground for two football teams costs £5, and assisted tickets another £4 (about 22 at 2d. loss for 24 weeks), the cost of £10 to £12 for two teams is not excessive.

The miscellaneous expenses alone in Mr. Neuman's estimate may be largely exceeded, and may run up to a considerable sum in many other ways than that shown. Mr. Neuman omits the summer outing or camp, which is a common and very useful, but expensive feature of boys' clubs. It is for that one week in the year that the boys are delivered into the hands of the managers.

But the amount, again, which the boys can contribute towards the expense (this varies from 5s. to 18s. for the week) leaves a heavy deficit to be met from the club funds. Mr. Neuman's expenses are calculated throughout on a liberal scale and with the intention that the club should be made thoroughly efficient. With the help of friends and gifts in plant and equipment, many of the expenses may be saved, and efficiency obtained at a smaller cost.

Speaking generally, however, managers have to cut their coat according to their cloth. If the means are not forthcoming, luxuries cannot be indulged in. And after all what is wanted in boys' clubs is work, work to know the boys and work to help them. With a manager present to impart keenness, football or cricket can be played, even on Wanstead Flats, at cost of a few shillings only for the ground and £2 or £3 for assisted railway fares. And cricket and football so played—though not worth much as games—are worth a good deal for the club. I feel inclined to conclude, then, with this word “work” as the first and last word of advice for managers of boys' clubs. But to do so is a hard doctrine, and for the benefit of “outsiders” something should perhaps be said in justification of boys' clubs. Existing managers have little to learn on the subject.



## VII

## RESULTS

It is difficult to demonstrate the *results* of boys' clubs. The results best worth having cannot be measured, and to discuss the abstract question of what has been achieved is like asking whether if things had been otherwise the result would have been different. Boys' clubs must justify their existence to those who manage them, and the managers have a complete right to dispute anyone else's right to judge the question. Some results are obvious. Rough lads' clubs—it is complained—become too respectable, and to be successful they have to continually start afresh. When analysed this statement means that a percentage of members have become civilised, and that the club is now being recruited from a superior class. The rest of the rough lads have given the club up, and to again attract them it is necessary to go back and start another club in order that the process may be repeated. It is the old story of Sisyphus rolling the stone. Against the idea of the Rough Lads' Club it may be worth while once more to set that of the club confined to a narrow district or school and determined to catch as many as possible of the boys before they become "roughs." And this is the main reason for the *existence* of boys' clubs. Go down any dark alley in London and ask your way. It will be

a boy that you will ask, and several boys who will answer. The boys have nowhere to go in the evenings. They are not wanted at home. Too often, even if they are wanted, there is no room for them. The club, then, is the alternative to the street, and to justify its existence it has only, at the lowest, to compare favourably with the street.

I have written throughout of what the fully developed club should be and ought to do, and I must here state how conscious I am that with boys' clubs the ideal is hard, almost impossible to reach. The difficulties are countless—indifference, slackness, irregularity, want of work with want even of the club penny, overtime, late hours, removals and loss of tried club members, quarrels between the boys, the competition of other clubs, the more serious competition of the attractions of the streets, the music-hall, and the other sex. These are at times enough to try the most robust faith in clubs. For on the other side of the account there is apt to seem so little to show—a few boys who have turned out right well, most a mere mediocrity, some a total failure. In happier moments, however, the manager must repudiate such tests; he must repudiate even that most searching test as to the proportion of boys retained right through in the club; he must trust to the general spirit which he meets in the club, the loyalty of the boys to the club, and to each other. And, indeed, not often are the persons who know the club, the managers, found

asking themselves if the work is worth the trouble. The work is really its own reward. A man of healthy instincts will not find that his youth is so far gone from him that he cannot share the interests, and with an effort appreciate even the humour of a street boy. The club will be full of the characters that he will remember from his own schooldays. Human nature is the same under all its varying forms. There will be the model boy, whom he will now view under another aspect, and the boy who is not a model, and whom he may not now feel inclined to make a hero. There will be the club captain—if all is well, his trusty ally; the small boy who needs protection, and the boy from whom he is to be protected; the club fool, that most difficult type, whose sin is to think that he does no wrong, who thinks himself, but is not thought, funny; the club baby; the club toady; and the club favourite. It is not without variety and interest, this small republic of ours. You once belonged to it yourself. Will you not again become an older member?

# THE GIRL IN THE BACKGROUND

By MISS LILY H. MONTAGU

NO study of boy life can be complete without some reference to the "girl in the background"; her influence has been recognised since the day when Adam attempted to justify himself in the Garden of Eden. Indeed, we believe that the power of women over men is based on a law of nature against which rebellion is impossible. It is one of the cherished principles underlying the national life of countries which boast of Western civilisation that the influence of the "girl in the background" tends towards purity, temperance, righteousness, and peace.

"O woman, lovely woman ! Nature made thee  
To temper man ; we had been brutes without you :  
Angels are painted fair to look like you ;  
There's in you all that we believe of heaven ;  
Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,  
Eternal joy and everlasting love."

This faith was embodied in the forms of chivalry which, in spite of their narrow artificiality, inflamed the popular imagination during the Middle Ages. Gradually the influence of this same faith broadened, until to-day it serves as the sanctification of home life and the life

of the State. The fact that woman has inspired most of the evil as well as most of the good known to human experience has happily not shaken our belief in her blessed potentialities.

In this chapter it is our purpose to discuss the relations between working girls and working boys. But we must at the outset of our inquiry recognise that there is one factor in these relations which baffles any attempt at scientific investigation. Womanly charm, the *ewig weibliche*, existing apparently by spontaneous generation, appears again and again to beautify and ennoble the lives of our working girls. Under present conditions, however, the training and environment of these girls militates against the existence and growth of the *best* in womanhood. The limits of space render it impossible to make a comparative study of the conditions prevailing in other classes of society. Otherwise we should probably be obliged to admit that even among the most cultured, the relations of girls to boys has not yet reached its highest development. It is only in modern times that conscious effort has been made to teach girls that they do not exist as the mere supplements to men, but that they possess the dignity of human beings with infinite possibilities and definite responsibilities. Heretofore they were as far as possible protected from contact with ugliness and evil. To-day they are being equipped with that moral, physical, and intellectual strength by which the world's pain may be combated.

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We want to see in girls the finest perceptions of truth, beauty, and purity, the greatest capacity for self-restraint and for the highest joys of self-sacrifice. While freely and gratefully admitting that these qualities *are* to be found not infrequently among working girls whose lives have not been subjected to much refining influence from without, we believe that social effort can be directed to rendering these instances of feminine nobility less miraculous in character. It is education, physical, mental, and religious education, that must ultimately be the chief factor in influencing the lives of working girls in their relation to boys.

The average working girl is intensely individualistic, very excitable, and pleasure-loving, and her sense of responsibility is little developed. What circumstances of life and training have contributed to these characteristics? What educational influence may tend to modify them? Before the great industrial revolution which initiated factory life in England, girls contributed their share to the home industries. They did their work under the natural protection of their parents. To-day, at the most susceptible age of fourteen, they are sent to factories as wage-earners, and become to a large extent independent of home control. In work they are exposed to the fierce knocks incidental to competition, or to the degrading influence of success won at the cost of another's discomfiture. The pauses in season trades have a bad influence on the moral fibre of the working

girl; her natural tendency to loafing becomes more marked. Girls are thrown into the arena of the industrial struggle without any training in citizenship. They have no idea that the State has any claim on their lives; their philosophy is of a fatalistic order. During the tiresome years preceding marriage they must work hard and take the pleasures and the pains which come their way, and make the best of both. They seek no way to control the circumstance of their lives. The conditions of factory life accentuate the girls' individualistic tendencies, which have to a certain extent been created in the school and in the home. In the school the large classes of children make individual character training difficult. Each pupil struggles either to pass the standards, or to escape the punishments inflicted on the idle. There is little time or opportunity to inculcate corporate feeling. The home conditions of our working classes is largely dependent on economic laws. Small and overcrowded rooms limit the outward realisation of the joys of family life. In tenement dwellings, where every corner of *home* is utilised for some domestic or industrial purpose, brothers and sisters can hardly enjoy that free intercourse which is a corrective of individualism. Excepting during the hours of sleeping and feeding, most of the scenes of family life are enacted in the streets. It is one of the most ghastly results of overcrowding that home life has no privacy for our poor. Except in those rare districts, blessed with the posses-

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sion of open spaces, the children of the street play together in the street and grow to adolescence, as units of a crowd, rather than as members of a family bound together to devote of their best to the service of the State. We must remember, moreover, that the wife of a working man has little leisure for character training. By warnings, bribes, and punishments she may exact a certain measure of obedience from her children. Her example influences them, whether for good or for evil. The extent of this influence depends ultimately on the individual responsiveness of each child. So a working girl enters her factory, feeling self-sufficient and self-dependent. Is it surprising that she has little sense of personal responsibility?

In the economic world the girl's place is inferior to that of the boy. She is of less value, for she is less well trained. She knows herself to be a fairly cheap article, and this fact lessens her sense of personal responsibility. Boys and girls very seldom compete in trade; they may perform different processes in the same industry, but their work is almost invariably quite distinct, and the boys' work is generally more skilled. The girl is glad to enter those trades in which she can pick up a few shillings quickly, for her wage-earning faculties improve her position in the matrimonial market. Indeed, her industrial life is only of temporary interest to the working girl, who regards it merely as a preliminary to marriage. Therefore she is disinclined to



spend much time in training, and prefers unskilled work in which wage-earning begins immediately.

The absence of industrial organisation among girls further tends to diminish their sense of personal responsibility. There is little incentive to good work beyond the desirability of good pay. The working girl does not realise that she can contribute to the honour of her trade. She merely knows that if she does not do well enough to satisfy the requirements of her employer, a hundred other girls will be ready to take her place in the factory. As soon as the factory working hours are over her responsibilities are at an end, and she is ready to forget, as far as her weariness will permit, the drudgery of the day in the enjoyment of any fun which may come within her reach. It is only when we realise the monotony of the workshop life that we can understand why the craving for excitement is almost a necessary element in the working girl's composition. As a child she was dependent on street incidents for most of her pleasures. She is not as an adult impervious to the nervous excitement which characterises all sections of the community at the present day, and this craving is, of course, intensified by her limited experience of other forms of happiness, and by the dulness and repression of her working life. Her very nature cries out for change and amusement. She loves crudities, for she has not been initiated into refined joys. The susceptibility and sensitiveness of girl nature are the sources of its highest

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potentialities. But these very qualities render girls more liable than boys to surrender their best selves to the degrading influences of their environment. It is because of their individualistic, irresponsible, and pleasure-loving tendencies that we find so many unsatisfactory elements in the working girl's influence over the boy. Flirting is the main object of their intercourse. Public opinion demands apparently little else. Anyone travelling on the Great Eastern Railway in a third-class carriage on a Sunday can never have gathered from the prevailing conversation any suggestion of serious comradeship. It is the talk of children, but it is not child talk. We ask in fear, what does it promise for the future? Flirtation affords amusement, and even when it passes the boundary of pure fun, and becomes degrading in character, the elders listen and are not offended. They know from personal experience the monotony of workshop life, and they would be loath to interfere with Sunday play. The boys and girls see no serious meaning in love-making; they are playing a game. They have been trained less to reverence one another than to protect their own independence.

In working-class homes, owing to the economic conditions which we have noted, there is little opportunity for healthy intercourse between brothers and sisters. Their interests are generally separate, and this separation is emphasised by the crude and obvious efforts made to secure a proper standard of decency.

His superior value in the labour market gives the boy an artificial superiority in the home, and it is not unusual to find his sisters waiting upon him hand and foot, as if, indeed, he belonged to a higher order of creation. During work hours boys and girls in large factories and large workshops do not as a rule come in close contact, for, as we have already noted, they devote themselves to different trades, or to different branches of the same trade. In the small domestic workshops their relations are often unsatisfactory, owing in a great measure to the want of self-control shown by the girls, who are ready to relieve workshop monotony by flirtation. During their leisure hours "walking out" is the chief interest in the lives of the boys and girls. This amusement hardly begins before the girls have reached the age of sixteen. Up to that time they regard boys with objective interest, but gradually a more intimate intercourse suggests infinite opportunities for delightful excitement.

\* The city working girl feels no hesitation in *passing the time of day* with any boy she meets. If she is self-respecting, she knows exactly how far her friendship may go without becoming dangerous. The boy is made to feel immediately the limit of intimacy beyond which he may not pass. It is more amusing for a girl to walk

\* This passage is mainly taken from a paper on "Popular Amusements of Working Girls," read at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers at Edinburgh in the autumn of 1902.

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out with a "fellow" than to walk alone, and she sees no reason why she should not accept the favours which chance puts in her way. This walking out is undertaken with a light heart, as it can be given up at any moment. Moreover, the long period of acquaintance is a satisfactory preparation for marriage, and suggests a principle which might with advantage be adopted by other classes of society. Betrothal is among working people nearly as binding as the marriage ceremony itself. Roman Catholics consecrate their betrothal by making their communion together; if after this ceremony the match is broken off the matrimonial prospects of the offending party are for ever blighted. A working girl's eagerness to have a young man is perfectly comprehensible. Marriage alone can save her from the dreary prospect offered by the uncongenial workshop, where she can never save enough from her wages to be independent in her old age. The girls are so happy in the company of their young men, they so thoroughly enjoy the fun they have together. As with every other woman, a working girl's chief need is to be cared for, to be loved and protected, to be wanted by somebody, to make a difference to somebody. She is tired of being part of the industrial machinery of the great callous city to which she belongs. She wants consideration for herself, for her individuality, she wants appreciation for her person. Are we seriously surprised that early marriages occur so frequently?

As a rule girls run after boys, and in due course the boys turn and run after the girls. The girls make their first onslaught in a spirit of frivolity, their more serious motives being at the beginning at least subconscious. It is true that they *are* influenced by the conventions of their sets, inasmuch as the dread of being "odd women" strongly affects them. The horror of a continuous workshop life has entered into their soul, and "the young man" possibility alone offers them an escape. They are also strongly of opinion that if they let their opportunity slide it may never return. Their experience in the labour market has made them self-reliant and combative, and they realise that in the struggle for the prizes of life they must help themselves, and these subconscious considerations certainly influence their conduct. Primarily, however, girls "run after boys" because it amuses them to do so; because the pursuit offers unlimited excitement; because they are conscious of certain powers, and are anxious to exercise them fully. Their sense of responsibility has never been trained, and therefore it is not strong enough to curb their desire for enjoyment. But it often happens that when the fun is at its height the girls suddenly realise that if they persist their days of gaiety are numbered. They have tested their powers, and realised the joy of conquest. Now they pause to consider whether they shall seize their prize. They do not wish to make themselves too cheap. Some more fun can be derived from aloofness. Then

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comes the turn for the boys. The charm has worked upon them, they have become voluntary bondsmen, and they refuse now to be free. The girls test the boys' worth by the degree of persistency shown in courtship. They themselves yield ultimately to this persistency, and their surrender is sometimes expedited by fits of jealousy or by the desire to excel their companions in the speedy settlement of their matrimonial plans. They are only inclined to jilt the boys who do not show enough spirit or eagerness in courtship, for at whatever cost they are determined to prove their independence, that one possession which makes their lives worth living.

To some girls marriage itself is merely an incident in their business career, but to most it offers the *change* for which their nature craves. They are seldom oppressed by the thought of the struggle which follows marriage, of the tragedy of motherhood for her who has not the means to lead a complete life, of the difficulties of wifehood. They think nothing of all these.

While the industrial and home conditions of a working girl's life tend to produce that restless love of excitement for which she is remarkable, we find that her natural recreations serve merely to sustain it. The novels which she chooses do not reveal the highest possibilities of love and marriage. Their sentiment is either so mawkish as to promote hysteria or so artificial as to leave untouched the real issues of life. Again,

the working girl enjoys on the stage the display of morbid passion, because she is familiar with it in her own life. Can we be surprised that, having had no experience of pure enjoyment, she soothes her feeling of unrest in the contemplation of crudities, whether revealed in the newspaper column of police news, in the halfpenny novelette, or on the music-hall stage? Girls living in rough districts are often inspired by "these studies" to instigate and encourage fights among their boys by rewarding the victors with their favour.

We have then only to recognise the natural effects of a working girl's surroundings in order to appreciate the fact that until her sense of personal responsibility is aroused and her conception of happiness is purified her influence must inevitably tend to lower the standard of conduct prevalent in the society to which she belongs. Social workers have to ask themselves how far it is possible by means of educational and recreational organisation to combat the evils which we deplore. We would on no account admit that human effort will not ultimately triumph over the economic conditions which are at the root of much of our social demoralisation. But, seeing that these conditions are interwoven with the foundations of modern civilisation, they cannot be speedily eradicated. In the meantime the girls who are growing up at the present day must be helped to realise the birthright which they receive from God, and to use it in His service. Let us then turn from examining the

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influences affecting the girls' lives to investigate some of the aspects of the remedial work undertaken by various agencies, and note its beneficent possibilities.

In elementary schools a few experiments have been made in co-education, but it would be premature to estimate its influence on the lives of the pupils. In many schools, however, the efforts of teachers and managers through guilds and happy evenings, and above all through personal influence, to awaken the corporate instinct in girls must be regarded with satisfaction. The teachers are trying to free themselves from the slavery of routine in order to consider the individuality of their pupils. County Council scholarships have stimulated a search for talent, and so relieved the crushing monotony of board school life. The democratic *faith* of the age has inspired teachers and managers to appeal to the highest instincts of the children under their care, instead of creating an artificial standard of plebeian ineptitude, and these appeals seldom result in disappointment. Managers are learning to regard the pupils less as units in the industrial aggregate than as members of human families. In the face of every sort of discouragement the parents' sympathy is sought through home visiting, and the school authorities are beginning to consider the possibility of enlisting their interest in the educational problems affecting their children. Efforts are made to arouse mothers to regard seriously the technical training of their daughters, as well as of their



sons. Energetic managers visit mothers during the last years of their girls' school-life, and ask that the choice of a trade should rest on more important considerations than the immediate picking up of a few pence. Even though all the girls in one street have for years been engaged in the fur-pulling, or in the trouser trade, a zealous manager may induce an individual mother to apprentice her daughter to a skilled trade, where her self-respect is likely to increase with her efficiency as a worker.

The girls who have been encouraged by their teachers to develop their individuality, and those who have become skilled workers in honourable trades, are not likely to throw away their chance of complete self-realisation in order to enjoy promiscuous flirtation.

Nevertheless we have noted that as soon as the discipline of school is removed and the process of wage-earning begins, girls are most seriously in need of training and protection. Their precocious self-dependence in itself menaces their proper development. Since the conditions of tenement life limit the possibilities of home influence, clubs for working girls have come into existence to counteract the present unsatisfactory tendencies of girls' industrial life and to suggest higher standards in work and in conduct.

These clubs include in their scheme of work the attempt to correct that tendency to individualism and self-seeking which are produced by workshop life. They

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stimulate the members' power of self-control and their sense of responsibility and widen the average conception of happiness. Inasmuch as they do these things, they have become powerful agents in improving and adjusting the relations between working boys and girls.

"The club stands to its members for the realisation of their womanhood," wrote Miss Pethick in her article on Working Girls' Clubs which appeared in Mr. Reason's book on *University and Social Settlements*. "In our overcrowded cities we have crowded out womanhood. I know that moral miracles happen, that purity and virtue can survive in the most infected atmosphere, and can be the stronger for the resistance to evil; but the average man is such as his environment makes him, and the average factory girl does not hold a higher standard than that she sees adopted by her neighbours. Even where the conditions of life are very much better, where the imagination and feeling are not vitiated, the working girl is generally quite untrained to any thoughtful apprehension of life. She grows up unguarded into irresponsible and unguarded womanhood, and unready to hold the keys of a future destiny—the woman's most sacred trust. And in the club a high standard is being lifted. It *must* be lifted; otherwise the club not only misses its opportunity, but is in danger of becoming a positive evil. It *can* be lifted because there is nothing a girl's heart more quickly expands to than the idea of womanhood dignified into its consciousness of duty." The girls can be made

to recognise the meaning of their trust, and this knowledge corrects that spirit of irresponsibility which so often causes their intercourse with boys to end in degradation.

In the club, the leaders have to direct their girls' energy to the realisation of the highest standards of happiness, the happiness of self-development and the happiness of service. By dint of technical art-teaching a girl is initiated into the joys of creation. The production of a beautiful piece of handiwork stimulates her self-respect. Her corporate feeling is roused when she joins a choral class, or a class for physical drill, and contributes her individual energy to the general success. Factory life makes little claim on the individual capacity of the worker; she therefore finds recreation in simple brainwork, which does not overtax her physical strength. The passing of standards does not inspire the average pupil with any great reverence for knowledge. The effort to study subjects which she had always thought easy, but which in reality call for long and patient perseverance, tends to correct in adolescence the false impressions conveyed by a short school-life. The girl's outlook on life is readjusted by the club—she realises the power of truth and purity, and is training to seek these essentials even in her intercourse with friends.

The club member's sense of responsibility is further stimulated by her desire to uphold the honour of her club. Gradually she herself is required to take a share

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in its management. She sees how her own conduct affects those with whom she is brought in contact, and her training in citizenship begins as soon as she is subjected to the discipline of associated interests. When she is away from the club this training helps her to triumph over the temptations and difficulties of her life.

Through friendship with women of culture, working girls become acquainted with the pleasures of peace afforded by reading, by country life, by the contemplation of works of art. Their dangerous craving for excitement is counteracted by indulgence in healthy recreation. They are no longer so inclined to accept flirtation as their only possible escape from the monotony of their lives. They have other interests besides the supreme one of courtship. If in the factory they feel of small account, they have in the club to set a truer value on themselves. New possibilities are revealed to them, and their lives become irradiated by ideals. Men are not slow to recognise self-control in girls; and the best results of club life are to be seen in the increased respect with which the members are treated by their boy friends. Perhaps the harvest of results would be greater if club-leaders would themselves more generally recognise their responsibilities. Like other philanthropists, club-workers are too easily satisfied with fringing the problems with which they should endeavour to grapple. They peep down the abyss in which the underfed, the ill-housed, and badly clothed work out

their life's drama, and then they turn their energies to surface polishing. They try to make their girls conduct themselves well in the clubs, and interest them and amuse them as best they can during their evening's leisure. But they are inclined to ignore the industrial life; they like to forget the grim truth that if girls work for less than a living wage, in a vitiated atmosphere, they are not likely to become the strong, self-controlled women whom we desire the clubs to train. They are afraid in their club to discuss the relations of girls to boys, lest they alight on dangerous ground. But if they are to serve their generation and satisfy the claims of posterity on their work, they must make their girls realise the difference between passion and love based on spiritual affinity. The girls' club can suggest ideals which may be developed even in the most uncongenial environment of tenement life. Club training, perhaps, achieves its best results generally by indirect methods. But unless the leaders do realise the most serious significance of their work, and do acquire some industrial and sociological knowledge; unless they are willing to understand the temptations affecting the girls' lives—their efforts are likely to be capricious and their influence merely superficial.

Undoubtedly the club leader's most important attribute is an unlimited power of sympathy, but this sympathy to be valuable must be based on knowledge, and must be expressed in the spirit of reality.

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Experience tends to prove that between the ages of fourteen and eighteen mixed clubs for girls and boys do not achieve the best results. It is possible that the method of separation may have only transitory value.

The new generation of parents may train their children to meet in a spirit of innocent camaraderie, which will have the best effect on both sexes. But so far most attempts to form mixed clubs have failed. In evening schools the organisation of mixed classes is seldom conducive to serious work; even in clubs where the personal influence of the leader is the strongest guarantee of success, the girls' tendencies to flirtation have again and again destroyed the usefulness of the enterprise. In a few cases, when a proper club spirit has been maintained, it has been found that the girls have worked separately from the boys, even though the lessons may have been given in the same classroom by the same teacher. Generally speaking, the mixed clubs have failed because the girls will not be interested in the boys except as potential bridegrooms. But when club-leaders have recognised their duties and given their members the training in responsibility and self-control, which they need, it is most desirable that the girls and boys should meet occasionally for social or educational purposes. Some preliminary training is, of course, necessary in the boys' clubs as well as in those of the girls'. The higher the standard of honour in the boys' club, the more successful are the mixed evenings likely to become.

Much good has been effected in boys' clubs by the influence of ladies. The boys begin to reverence womanhood when they have come in contact with real refinement in individual women. Ladies have been able to instil in rough lads a proper regard for the value of the domestic arts by cooking for them in a holiday camp. Later, the boys find that their own girls can respond to the influence of this same respect. For, as Mr. J. H. Badley says, "girls experience a ready sensitiveness to the opinion of others, expressed or guessed at, and a ready expression of personal feeling. This sensitiveness to approval or disapproval, and quickness, not only to feel, but to show their feeling, I take to be the real basis of authority among girls. This is, needless to say, a great advance . . . upon coercion by force. For the boy it represents a stage of progress, an ideal to move towards. When he is brought up against the fact that other means than physical force must be used towards a girl, he finds also that the expression of authority in other ways, and especially the *pressure of public opinion*, is surprisingly effective."

Much can also be done by the managers of clubs to stimulate the boys' sense of responsibility, and to broaden their interests, so that they may be able to resist the temptations of those early marriages which threaten the welfare of the state. It is not unusual for a boy who has attended his club regularly until the age of seventeen to suddenly absent himself without explana-

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tion. Perhaps some months later he is found by an interested manager to have already married, or to be inextricably entangled with the "girl in the background." In seizing her victim she probably did not mean any harm; her life was monotonous and dreary; she wanted a lark. Club members of both sexes must be taught to realise the joy and dignity of youth, and they will then be inclined to hesitate before sacrificing it on the altar of flirtation.

The experience of club-leaders bears complete testimony, that occasional mixed evenings are likely to be most successful. Indeed, their tone often compares favourably with that of many West End drawing-rooms. But the organisation of these evenings *must* be the outcome of a slow and careful preparation. It is recorded of an earnest club-leader that she once took her girls out for an excursion, and was to her amazement and sorrow obliged to return alone, because the camp which they passed had offered so many engrossing attractions to her girls. After some years of hard club work she was proudly able to take her party past those same attractions and suffer no similar humiliation. The appearance of a few boys at outings often creates a flutter of excitement, and an inexperienced leader once threatened her girls with expulsion from her club if they were found speaking to a boy while in her company!

When the period of probation is over, the responsibility of the mixed entertainments is best left to the



members themselves. For the honour of the clubs they will secure proper behaviour on the part of all the guests.

If we admit that the girl's influence, owing to her quick development and to her natural gifts, is paramount in her intercourse with boys, we dare not disregard the educational work necessary to render that influence beneficent. Of course, the ultimate responsibility for her advancement rests on the social workers who themselves have had the opportunities of the best training. They must seek to reveal in their work their devotion to the eternal verities rather than to the passing interests of the hour; their conception of God as the Judge "who sees every work, whether it be good or whether it be evil," and as the Father who expects from His children the development of their best faculties. They will find that working girls respond readily to these suggestions when inspired by love and sympathy; that they are loyal and steadfast in their behaviour to those whom they respect. The very hardness of the girls' lives gives them some moral strength; it rests with their leaders to see that this strength is directed to the realisation of the high destiny to which the human race aspires.

When girls and boys are able to approach the serious issues of life in a spirit of responsibility, they will have learned to understand the true meaning of recreation, and the greyness of life will be dispersed in the full light of human joyousness.

## CONCLUSION

By E. J. URWICK

**I**N this, the concluding essay, it is necessary to attempt to bring together and make explicit the inferences which have been suggested rather than drawn by the writers of the preceding chapters. What of our town boy's future—is it gloomy or hopeful? What are the present defects, in him and in the conditions in which he lives and grows and works? What is the order of their importance? Above all, that the conclusion may be a practical one, what should be done to remedy them? These are the questions to be answered, no longer under the special aspects of family life or club life or working life, but for the boy and his life as a whole.

And at the outset let it be stated emphatically that, though defects and remedies form the burden of our theme, we in no way approach the subject with any pessimistic feeling that everything is wrong, or that we are face to face with a mass of evils which call for radical, perhaps desperate, cures. In the picture of the boy as we know him, and as we would have others see him, the features that stand out are those of strong, healthy, and normal vitality, full of the possibilities of real and lasting progress, full too of hope and promise

for the future, and likely to-day, even without our solicitous efforts, to make that future a better one than his predecessors did or could make theirs. If for the moment we turn attention to the pathology of the subject, it is not at all because the morbid phenomena are the most prominent or the most common. It is necessary to insist upon this, lest the man in the street should find in our account too much confirmation of his unnecessary forebodings. He, knowing little at first hand, is habitually misled in his estimate of social evils, on the one hand, by the highly coloured appeals of the philanthropist, who, knowing better, allows his imagination to distort facts in the interest of his particular purposes, and on the other, by the irresponsible word-painting of the journalist, who is equally prone to exaggeration for no particular purpose at all. The result is unfortunate. On all hands one finds a falsely pessimistic conception of evils which undoubtedly exist, a belief in the existence of others, which happily do not, and an actual sense of disappointment when the facts are presented without either exaggeration or colouring. One wonders sometimes that the average man, imagining an extent of evil far in excess of fact, can possibly remain as inactive and callous as he is. Is it that his sensitiveness to social dangers and social suffering has been overstimulated by the repetition of bitter cries, so that he has come to believe, without reflection, that slums and squalor, semi-starvation and hooliganism, are

the normal condition of "the poor"? If so, he is unlikely to be moved, as we would have him be, by a picture of boy life in which the light is stronger than the shade; nor would we try so to move him, were it not necessary to bring the force of public opinion to our aid for the removal of the evils which really exist.

It would seem, however, that the alarmist view of the town boy's future, in one respect at least, is shared by far more competent judges than the journalist and the man in the street. His physical condition, we are told, is deplorable, and is steadily deteriorating. Commission and Committee have reported most gloomily; medical and military experts have endorsed their reports. Stunted growth, ubiquitous disease, deficient stamina—these are the counts in the indictment universally made against the boy's physique. And, not unnaturally, the physical aspect of the matter is held to decide the whole question of his well- or ill-being. In any estimate of the general welfare the physical conditions tend to take precedence of the moral and spiritual. They alone impress the popular mind; for they alone are at once tangible and visible, and also susceptible to the tests of scientific measurements. The others are matters of opinion; and the opinions of the spiritual experts differ notoriously according to their bias. But the medical evidence in proof of physical degeneracy is definite and very positive. Little wonder, then, that popular sentiment is uneasy, and inclined to believe that our town

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population is going rapidly to the bad. It will be well, therefore, to deal first with the physical condition of the boy, readily admitting that, though intelligence and character have a higher social value than physique, yet health of body cannot be separated from health of mind. It has been said that the future lies with the nation of animals, not with the nation of philosophers ; and to this extent the saying is true, that vitality in the long run conditions virtue.

Let us state the position briefly. The evidence of physical deterioration is supplied from two sources : the returns of the inspector-generals of recruiting, and statistics based upon the examination of children in elementary and poor law schools. From the former we learn the following very disquieting facts :—Of the young men examined for the army, about 30 per cent. are at once rejected on account of physical unfitness. Of the 70 per cent. who pass the doctor, 40 per cent. are thrown out in the first two years of service. In other words, of every hundred men appearing before the doctor, little over thirty are really fit for military service. And it must be remembered that the standard of height and weight has been considerably lowered in the last fifty years. For the navy the figures are not much better. Of those who apply to the recruiting sergeants, a very large proportion are turned away without being brought before the doctor at all. Of the rest, 27 per cent. are rejected. Taking the figures for the large towns, we

get an even worse result. Thus of 11,000 men who volunteered at Manchester for service in South Africa, only 3,000 were accepted as physically fit; and of these only 1,200 came up to the standard of what a soldier ought to be. In York, Leeds, and Sheffield nearly 50 per cent. of the recruits are annually classed as not up to the army standard.\*

The examination of school children does not give a more reassuring result. In the industrial and reformatory schools we are told that the boys at the age of thirteen average four inches less in height and a stone less in weight than the ordinary public school boy at that age. Out of 1,000 boys examined at the age of fourteen, with a view to ascertaining how many of them might reasonably be expected to reach the naval standard at fifteen years and three months, only about 15 per cent. could be passed. The children in the ordinary elementary schools are not much better; but here we seem to find a marked difference according to the status of the child's family. Of 1014 boys examined at York, Mr. Seebohm Rowntree found (after arranging them in

\* It is sometimes forgotten that, as the general social and industrial conditions improve, the youths who offer themselves to the recruiting sergeant tend to come more and more from the lowest sediment of the population. Colonel Napier estimated that 80 per cent. join the ranks because physical unfitness and loss of character preclude them from "procuring their bread and butter elsewhere." It must be remembered, too, that in nearly all parts of London mothers have a very strong objection to their boys enlisting; and this objection makes itself felt all the more in cases where the home and family life are fairly good.

three sections—very poor and underfed; poor and occasionally underfed; fairly well-off and regularly fed) that at all ages from three to thirteen the boys in the poorest section are on a combined average  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. shorter than the boys in the middle section, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. shorter than the boys in the highest section; and that the average height of the boys in the poorest section, at the age of thirteen, is less by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. than that in the highest section, and their weight  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. less.\*

Now we are very clearly face to face here with a condition of things which calls aloud for remedies. Nor are we disposed to minimise the evils, especially when many of the remedies proposed aim at supplying exactly the things which we most desire for the boys of our acquaintance—better opportunities for games, for gymnastics and drill, for bathing, and for all kinds of outdoor and indoor exercise. Nevertheless, there is some silver lining to the cloud. It is possibly as untrue to say that the physique of the average town child of to-day is going from bad to worse as it would be to maintain that the physical conditions under which he lives are worse than they were. Bad as the physique of the

\* For an account of the general physical condition of children in England, the reader may refer to Sir J. Crichton-Browne's presidential address to the International Congress for the Welfare and Protection of Children, 1902 (P. S. King and Son, 2s. 6d.). The report of Lord Mansfield's Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland) contains most of the evidence at present available. The Royal Commission for the United Kingdom, appointed in 1901, has not yet reported.

town-dweller now is, among the poorest classes, there is reason to think that it was decidedly worse 50 or 100 or 150 years ago.\* In the days of the first Factory Acts anthropometric inquiries were not in vogue; but the evidence of observers goes to show that the physical condition of the children in the mill towns was as certainly worse then than it now is, as their housing, feeding, conditions of work, and sanitation were worse. What appears to be true is this: that the evils of stunted growth and badly developed organs are less in intensity, but much greater in extent to-day. And the shifting of the population from the country to the towns is, of course, to blame for this. Town life is better than it was in most respects. But to-day 77 per cent. of the whole population is living in towns, and only 23 per cent. in the country; whereas even so little as fifty years ago the proportion was reversed. Small wonder, then, that the undoubted evils of city life, as affecting the strength and health of the mass of our workers, loom larger now than ever before.

It is to be remembered also that our standards of physical well-being are continually rising in every direction. We were told by the British Association twenty years ago that the average public school boy was then, at the age of thirteen, some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches taller than his

\* For medical support of this view, see the remarks of Dr. J. Milson Rhodes on p. 23 of the Report of the International Congress for the Welfare of Children, referred to above.



predecessor of a generation before ; and further, that the stature of the whole race had risen  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch during the same period. We realise now better than ever before how close the connection is between healthy growth and sensible food, fresh air, and exercise. We expect better things,—rightly, for we know that they ought to be attainable for every citizen. And all this is to the good, for it gives ground for hope for the future rather than alarm for the present. The standards of the working classes are rising too, not slowly, but very quickly ; and with their rise the possibilities of a healthier life for the children are increased.

But how does this affect the poorest grades of the workers ? Where are we to find improvement among the children of the unskilled labourers ? What especially are we to say about the boys whom we have undertaken to describe—the lads who belong to the lowest ranks, and are destined to remain in the ranks of the unskilled and therefore poorly paid workers, when they become fathers of families ? There is not much room here for easy optimism. Childhood and boyhood alike are for these beset by pitfalls and cramped by limitations to an extent little realised by the well-to-do citizen. Not, of course, that all suffer equally ; to imply that would be to libel the thousands of fathers and mothers who by their care and sacrifice compel the hardest circumstances to be kind to their children. But for many or most of the parents of this class circum-

stances are too strong, and prevail in just those matters in which failure is so disastrous. It is not, as is too often thought, a simple question of the food-supply. That is sometimes insufficient, more often ill-chosen and wastefully innutritious. And after the age of fourteen, the boy, now a wage-earner, is fed with more consideration than the school child, who is only a burden. It is not a question of the supply of fresh air to quite the extent supposed. In many of the densest working-class districts of London the air is little worse than in the suburbs, and the children get more of it, in a way. In some of the worst neighbourhoods the river, the docks, and the magnificent main thoroughfares supply the lungs elsewhere afforded by parks and gardens; while the ill effects of close rooms and never-opened windows are at least mitigated by the many hours spent in the streets. And it is not a question of exercise, in the ordinary sense. The street is a poor playground, no doubt; but the doorstep- and pavement-evolutions of the armies of children, left leaderless from the age of three or four onwards, involve a fairly constant, if ill-directed, use of muscle and limb. We must go deeper than this for the real defects; the causes of failure are to be found in things more subtle and less obvious than food and air and play.

Among these less obvious influences which count for most in the physical development of the child the most vital have been grouped, in the order of their importance,

under the three heads of Mothering, Homing, and Schooling. It is the first two of these, the mothering and the homing, that are so often far to seek in the family life of the unskilled labourers. This has been so fully illustrated in Mr. Bray's opening essay that it is unnecessary to labour the point here. It is among the members of his poorest class, the one and two-room dwellers, that these two influences are most defective; and it is in this class that the physical evils find their natural soil. For here the "dead point" of family life is so frequently reached, chance taking the place of the mother, the street supplanting the influence of the home, and both together conspiring to nullify the schooling provided by the State. Herein lies the real danger; to the absence of a healthy family life must be traced, in the last analysis, the evils of physical deterioration and the decline of physical energy.

"The decline of physical energy." The phrase falls naturally enough; but how unreal and impossible it sounds to those who have anything to do with the living boy of the street in his leisure time! Though the assertion that his energy is declining be backed by every medical authority in the land, it must still meet only amused incredulity on the part of those who try—and try in vain—to control the superfluous energy at his disposal at the end of his day's work. Surely some further modification still is needed in order to reconcile the doctrine of degeneracy with the facts? At any rate,

the observer who has no tests but his own experience to guide him cannot but think so. Want of mental energy he will admit, if you will; want of steady persistence and of purpose, also; but a fund of physical energy withal which it makes one tired to watch. Is not this the universal experience of club managers, who spend their evenings with the poorest class of boys? And note a further contradiction here. We are told that there is an increase of "hooliganism"—to use for once the rather foolish name for the lawless devilries of the youthful street rowdy—and this, of course, among the boys and girls of the lowest class. But we are told, too, and rightly, that "we must associate with it a class of boys bursting with animal energy." Whence does it come, then, this unnatural supply of energy, found in the very boys who, more than all others, ought to be anæmic, weak, and deficient in vitality? Is it merely a puzzling symptom of their morbid condition, or is a different explanation possible? We will put it forward with all diffidence, for it is the result only of impressions and vague though uniform observation. The badly fed (that is, strangely and unhealthily fed) town boy of the poorest classes weighs less and measures less than the country boy reared on more wholesome food, in better air, and under cleaner conditions. He is also the victim of defects, due, alas! in very many cases, to inherited disease rather than to an unhealthy environment. But he possesses, none-the-less, a remarkable toughness of

fibre, a sort of indiarubber capacity of recovery from fatigue or injury or the damage done by his surroundings, as well as an alertness and quickness of movement, which seem to be drawn from the very conditions of his town life. He ought, of course, to die early, as the result of all that his stomach and lungs have to suffer in childhood. He ought to lose all his vitality before middle life, as the result of all that his nervous system has to suffer in street and factory. But he does neither. May it not, therefore, be permissible to hope that he is undergoing, slowly and painfully, a process of adaptation to the environment which has become the condition of his existence? That he is developing, under the stress of city life, a new type of humanity, which may, in spite of its present glaring defects, eventually lead to something more perfectly adjusted to the demands of town existence and to modern industrial requirements? This, at least, is the conclusion to which one ventures optimistically to come, after some years' personal acquaintance with the London boy and man. And we are encouraged to hope that it is not an altogether preposterous notion by finding that even medical authorities do not all scout it as absurd.\*

\* In support of the view here taken let two quotations suffice. The one is from a paper read by Dr. Archdall Reid at a meeting of the London Sociological Society in May, 1904. "We have frequently been told," he writes, "that no city family can persist for more than four generations unless fortified by country blood. That, I believe, is a complete error. Country blood does not strengthen city blood. It weakens it; for country

We would submit, also, that some such adaptation, some development of a town type, is necessary, if our population is to survive at all. One hears it stated on all sides, as a truism, that "the townsman will inevitably and always become less healthy than the countryman." One is told that his only chance of survival is in the constant reinforcement of his vigour by fresh blood from the country, or in his own return to an agricultural life. But the supply of country stock is already drained nearly dry; seventy-five per cent. of it has been used up in the last fifty years. And the cry of "back to the

blood has been less thoroughly purged of weak elements. It is true, owing to the large mortality in cities and the great immigration from the country, it is difficult to find a city family which has had no infusion of country blood for four generations. But to suppose on that account that country blood strengthens city blood against the special conditions of city life is to confuse *post hoc* with *propter hoc*.

"Slum life and the other evil influences of civilisation, including bad and insufficient food, vitiated air, and zymotic diseases, injure the individual. They make him acquire a bad set of traits. But they do not injure the hereditary tendencies of the race. Had they done so civilisation would have been impossible. Civilised man would have become extinct. On the contrary, by weeding out the unfittest, they make the race strong against those influences."

The other is from an authority of a different kind. Dr. Barnardo, who, at any rate, has had a very wide experience of London boys of the poorest class, is reported to have said in a recent interview that the "slum children" have, in recent years, not deteriorated, but, on the contrary, vastly improved. The children he now deals with "are physically better than they used to be. They are, generally speaking, well grown and well nourished, capable of being trained into vigorous men and women. There has been a distinct advance in that way. There are not now so many withered and wasting little ones."

land" is a cry for a remedy put out of court by the whole evolution of modern industry. The production of the future is production by machinery; and nine-tenths of that production, with its increasing subdivision and interdependence of processes, demands that both the machines and the hands that work them shall be grouped together in masses. Town life of some sort—life and work in large aggregates—is the condition imposed on the labourer by the industry which determines his lot. And as the handicraftsman gives place to the motor-man, the hand-worker to the machine-tender, the user of muscle to the user of nerve or finger; as the hammer-man is ousted by the steam-hammer, the porter by the crane, the navvy and the ground-worker and the coal-porter by the steam-shovel and the "greedy billy"; as even the carpenter finds his work done by the sash-and-door-making machinery, and the engineer and smith and plumber are turned into fitters;—so it becomes more and more useless to expect that the muscle, which is no longer needed, will be developed by work which is no longer to be done, or that health and strength will be drawn naturally from occupations which no longer exist.

The problem of the future, then, is adaptation—to the new conditions of industry, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the town life, or the life in large aggregates, which they entail. But, fortunately for us, a twofold adaptation is possible: that of the man to the

environment, and that of the environment to the man. And though the former may involve, and we believe is involving, some modification of physique, there is no reason to imagine that the race of the future must be weak, puny, and anæmic. Town life and factory life need not always be what we have been accustomed to see them; garden cities are not altogether an idle dream, nor healthy mills and workshops an interesting anomaly. The work itself, we must admit, will not aid growth and development, but it may be made to hinder them less. The workman has won leisure, and therein, if only he can use it aright, lies the key to his physical salvation.

We see, then, clearly enough the moral which emerges from the consideration of the town boy's physique. It is briefly this. Setting aside, as beyond our scope, the question of better feeding, of better mothering, and of better homing, we must agree that the working boys in our cities are terribly handicapped in their efforts to make in their leisure time opportunities for healthy physical recreation. They *want* to enlarge their muscles and expand their chests; few things are so noticeable as the spread of "Sandowism" among the very poorest boys; it is almost as if the boy-organism were feeling its way by instinct to the correctives of its own disorders. But for how many can the impulse find a satisfactory outlet? How many can join a gymnastic squad, learn to box and wrestle properly,



learn and practise dumb-bell and club exercises, or swimming, or drill?—all of which things they do so well if only they are put fairly in the way of them. They *want*, too, to play football and cricket, as the public school boy does; and they are offered—what? For a hundred thousand of them to use as best they may, a couple of “wastes,” an expanse of undrained and untended “flats” five miles away, a park or two, on which a few hundred at most can play, and a payment in almost every case by way of rent far beyond the ordinary boy’s pocket. Every evening and every Saturday afternoon finds at least three-quarters of them loafing in the streets. Can you wonder at it?

Now the consequences of this lack of opportunities are disastrous far beyond the simple physical effects. As a nation we pride ourselves on the universal devotion to outdoor games on the part of boys and young men. The devotion may be excessive, but it is healthy; and nothing like it is to be found in any other country. Even in America only a minority of the boys at school or college play games, and they may be said rather to pursue certain athletic exercises as a semi-professional occupation for the sake of the applause of the majority who only look on. But how far is the healthy game-playing a real national characteristic nowadays? It belongs to the boys of the comfortable classes certainly; to the great mass of the working boys in the towns not at all. The instinct is there, but it is starved; the

opportunities for its development are wanting. And the result is that the discipline of organised games—the physical and moral discipline—is lost to them. We talk very loud about their physical degeneracy, and we leave them to spend their leisure in loafing.

It may, perhaps, be objected that more opportunities are now provided than are used by the boys. Witness the open playgrounds for the younger ones, which have proved less attractive than the streets which they were meant to supersede; or the open-air gymnasiums in the parks, seldom utilised except by a handful of irresponsible tumblers. But it argues a blank ignorance of the nature of the boy to imagine that the mere provision of apparatus is likely to benefit him much, or that the provision of anything further than a few yards from his own street will benefit him at all, except on one condition. For this is another of the strange characteristics of boy-nature, namely, a certain conservative immobility which causes him to seek all his satisfactions within a minutely circumscribed radius. Give the Poplar boys a week's holiday, and the chances are that not half of them will leave Poplar—unless someone takes them. And like boy like man. Their elders may wander further afield for a beanfeast or in search of work, but the park a mile away will see them hardly once a year. We are by no means urging that philanthropic or municipal effort should provide playing fields or places for indoor exercise, and then leave them to take their

chance of use. That would only aggravate the situation by unnecessary waste. The need is emphatically a double one, of increased opportunities and of an increase of people who will see that they are used. The latter can be met in one way only—by a decrease of general apathy, and a growing conviction that the boy is the most helpable creature to be found, and that every bit of trouble taken to improve his body or mind is quickly repaid both by the result and by the interest of the task.

But of this more later. In the present connection the object is to point out that the need for apparatus (in the very widest sense) is a very pressing one, and that numbers of the boys are already prepared, by the organisation of clubs of all kinds, to use the supply to any reasonable extent.

The public has probably little conception of the expenses which fall upon a club manager in connection with the recreation and exercise of his boys. Some of them are unavoidable; the club premises must be paid for in any case. But some are needlessly heavy. The teaching of gymnastics, for instance, essential as it is to a successful club, need not entail the purchase and upkeep of a gymnasium for each club. Why should not selected schools be equipped with apparatus, to be used on different evenings by the evening class scholars and the club boys of the neighbourhood? The payment of an efficient instructor, again, is often a serious difficulty

in a small club. The State or municipality already supplies teachers of all sorts of subjects, even including lecturers on hygiene for mothers' meetings. Why should they not also appoint a small number of gymnastic and drill instructors, who might be used, for a small payment, wherever a club had got together a squad of reasonable size? Swimming, again, presents difficulties greater than is quite necessary. Free tickets at the public baths have been given to the scholars of the evening schools under the London School Board; but they are, with a few exceptions, of a better-off class than the boys whose physical needs we are considering. For these we would ask, not for free tickets, indeed—they can perfectly well pay *1d.* or *2d.*, and it is good that they should pay something for what is so much a pleasure to them—but some reduction in the present minimum charge of *4d.* Might not the borough councils be persuaded to make this concession, and perhaps to set aside an hour or two in the week when the baths might be reserved for swimming lessons and practice for club boys, on the condition, which the managers would see was well kept, that the opportunities should be neither abused nor only half used? With rather more diffidence, but with even greater certainty of the urgency of the need, we would suggest that the question of playing fields should be taken in hand by the municipal authorities. It may be impossible to make land for cricket fields; it cannot be impossible

to lay out properly, drain, and keep in order the land that exists, and to arrange for the use of it without charging burdensome rents.

Are we asking too much of the community on behalf of its poorest children? What does it all amount to? A trifling expenditure of money, a little care for the interests of that part of the population which is least able to take care of itself, and a little more confidence in the results of such expenditure of money as we have suggested. We would be inclined to add—a little more true realisation of the gravity of the evils to be combated; but this might seem inconsistent with the protest we have made against the exaggerated conception of the boy's physical deterioration. Let us, then, alter the phrase a little, and ask for a deeper realisation of the evils of street loafing, and more concentration of the public attention upon the waste of national strength and health which results from the pitiful waste of leisure time on the part of the working boys of our cities.

Before we leave this part of our subject, we must add a word or two on the subject of the want of confidence in the results of such efforts as we have indicated. It is quite natural that the men and women who are now doing something, as volunteers, to organise and supervise the recreation and instruction of working boys and girls, should be regarded with some distrust. They—the writers of these essays might here drop into the first person, and say “we”—are a motley band of

irregulars, doing their best without much method, and without any of that co-ordination and union among themselves which would strengthen their efforts and raise the standard of their work. Herein lies one of the great weaknesses of clubs and brigades and all similar agencies. They ought to be co-ordinated; they ought to fall into line under some central organisation which would not only give solidity and unity to the work now being done, but would inspire the public with confidence in their ability to use well any additional help that may be given in the future.

There already exists an organisation competent to perform the functions indicated. The Twentieth Century League, founded under the auspices of the Bishop of London in 1901, aims at co-ordinating and strengthening all the voluntary agencies, such as clubs and brigades, which try to provide for the boys and girls of the metropolis better facilities for recreation and improvement in their leisure time. The League has occupied itself hitherto with collecting information and issuing appeals for gifts of money and personal service to an unresponsive public; and the result has been insignificant. Meanwhile its relations with the managers of clubs and brigades are hardly cordial. The latter would hail the gifts—which do not come—with enthusiasm; they are at best lukewarm in their appreciation of repeated requests for facts and figures wherewith to touch the callous public conscience. And they are too

self-centred to care much about a central organisation which fails to benefit them in any tangible way.

But might not the League find a really important work to do on the lines we have suggested? If it would take in hand the whole question of the organisation of the facilities for recreation and exercise for the boy and girl members of clubs, managers as well as members of clubs and brigades would have reason to be grateful. It might treat with the county and borough councils for the use of open spaces at their disposal, of halls and school premises for regular or occasional use in winter, of local swimming-baths for the organised teaching of swimming at definite times. A single club or group of club managers has little chance of getting a hearing from the local authorities; it has no status as representative of anything but itself. But even a borough council conceivably might, and the county council almost certainly would, pay attention to the petitions of a central and really representative body.

The League might also, in conjunction with other societies, such as the Lads' Drill Association and the Federation of Working Boys' Clubs, improve the system by which teams of boys and youths share the use of existing open spaces, might see that they were made and kept more fit for use, and might perhaps obtain from tram and railway companies special rates for all recognised boys' clubs. There is also much to be done in the way of arranging inter-club competitions of all

kinds, not for London as a whole, but for each district. Nothing does so much to stimulate the keenness of the boys as a healthy local rivalry which finds a legitimate outlet in annual competitions. At present they are extremely rare; and the expense of hiring halls and providing prizes added to the great labour of organising them, deters the already much harassed club managers from undertaking the task. One or two competitions for the whole of London have been instituted; but they are not successful. The area is too vast; distances are too great; the clubs of north and south or east and west are too unknown to each other for any keen rivalry to exist.

It is high time, however, that we left the question of the boy's physique, and turned to the much more vital question of his mental and moral characteristics. So far as it is possible to divide the subject and to treat separately the mental qualities and the moral, it will be convenient to do so, bearing in mind always that the two are never really separable, but that the one reacts upon the other as surely as the education of the mind reacts upon the formation of character.

We have seen reason for thinking that the alarmist views about the town boy's physical condition tend to be unduly exaggerated. We shall find that the same exaggeration meets us, in a crude form, when we turn to the popular estimate of the moral depravity of the "slum boy." Not so, however, in the matter of his



mental deficiency; here there is not too much, but too little alarm. Why this should be so it is not of much importance to determine. Possibly it is because, as a nation, we take not the smallest interest in education—apart, of course, from disputes over extrinsic matters which may happen to be brought into accidental connection with the subject; possibly also because deformity and depravity are so much more interesting than stupidity, and supply so much better material for sensational accounts. But the fact itself is of supreme importance; the town boys, and therefore the working boys of the nation, are allowed to grow up needlessly ignorant and unintelligent, and the nation neither heeds nor cares.

Before, however, we analyse the existing defects, we must determine what kind of ignorance is pernicious and what kind of knowledge is important to the boy who is going to earn his living with his hands. It may not matter much that a party of young working men, discussing the Russo-Japanese war, have to ask whether the Baltic is anywhere near Japan; that a lad whose brother has just died of phthisis is surprised to hear that this is a communicable disease; that in some parts of London it is believed that every Roman Catholic is necessarily an Irishman; or that the majority of working men are convinced that the clergy of the English Church are all paid by the State out of the taxpayers' pockets. Such things may or may not be of importance to the citizen; they fall, however, under the head of general

information, and the ignorance may perhaps be left to be remedied in time by the increasing readiness on the part of all the working classes to join in discussing the universe, and by the incipient tendency to look beyond the sporting news in the evening papers.\* What we are specially concerned with is the knowledge or ignorance which directly affects the labourer's competence as a wage-earner and his intelligence as a wage-spender. Now for the competent worker and wage-earner the supreme essentials, in the present conditions of industry, may be summed up in two words—intelligence and adaptability. And this is true both for the skilled and the unskilled labourer.† For the former (that is, the man who requires either a special training or else a long period of practice before he can become a full journeyman workman) these qualities are to-day even more important than technical skill. The latter is, of course, necessary; and technical education is essential as part of the training of one section of our industrial army. More than this: no other education would be needed for this section if it always followed the aim originally laid down

\* It is a grave misfortune that the evening papers are so far inferior to those published in the morning. The majority of working men seldom read anything except the evening "halfpennies," and a Sunday paper, which is little better. They are hardly to be blamed if their gain from the Press is still very small.

† There is no possibility of drawing a clear line between these two. Now that entrance to a trade does not depend, in most cases, upon apprenticeship, no satisfactory definition can be given of a skilled workman or a skilled trade.

for it.\* But even the skilled, technically trained handicraftsman is unsafe unless his special skill and craft are supplemented by a training which will enable him to adapt himself readily to new conditions. He cannot depend upon his specialism; at any moment its market value may be destroyed or reduced by the introduction of a new invention or by a change in the processes of manufacture. The skilled compositor may at any moment have to go before a linotype machine; or the hand-sewer of boot-soles before a machine which sews the sole to the welt as well as any hand. The history of the past century and a half is full of such changes; full, too, of the failure and disappearance of the skilled workman whom machinery has superseded. It has gone ill in the past, and in the future it is likely to go equally ill, with the craftsman who has too little intelligence or too little versatility to adapt himself quickly to the change. For this reason we cannot hope for much from a revival of the old system of apprenticing. If, as often

\* Perhaps the best account of what technical education ought to be is given by Prof. J. S. Mackenzie in his *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, chap. vi. It has, he points out, two purposes to serve: first, to minimise that stunting of the individual nature which results from occupation with a part that is not understood in relation to the whole to which it belongs. Secondly, to suggest the relation of particular employments not merely to the whole with which they are immediately connected, but to the system of life whose ends all particular employments subserve. "It is intended, in short, to stimulate that intelligent appreciation of purposes which makes almost the meanest employment interesting." But how many technical classes succeed in doing anything like this?

happens, it means learning some technical specialty without getting a broader and wider training, the result may be disastrous.

But to the unskilled labourer technical education and apprenticeship do not apply. To equip him for the work which must be done, and which he must do, no short cut has been devised ; nor is there anything which can meet his needs except the simple and commonplace remedy of—more education of a general kind. At present he leaves the board school at the age of fourteen ; from then on until he is too weak to work at all he will be working in one or more of the thousand and one occupations for which no special training or long practice is needed. In some few of these occupations great muscular strength is necessary, and therefore still has its market. In many, especially in those which involve machine-tending or factory work, quickness of nerve and of eye, toughness of fibre and staying power, are essential. But in all alike, without any exceptions, intelligence, quickness of brain, and power of adaptation are the all-important requisites. This is no mere surmise based upon a theoretical analysis of the conditions of labour ; to an increasing extent the qualities we have named are demanded by practical manufacturers. “ I do not want any more mechanicians or chemists or technically trained men ; I want ordinary workmen who have learned to use their brains.” Such is the form in which the need was recently expressed by one of the biggest

employers in London. And it applies no less to the navy than to the machine-tender. All labour, it has been said, is mental; to a large and controlling extent the mental element is present in the simplest operations. With the labourer who shovels in the gravel pit the directing and controlling influence of the mind predominates to an indefinite extent over the simple foot-pounds of mechanical force which he exerts. Still more is this the case in the increasingly complicated processes of modern manufacture, and therefore in the bulk of the work which belongs to all the well-organised industries. The gap between skilled and unskilled labour becomes here less and less as the latter becomes constantly more a matter of head and less a matter of muscle. Machines can do the work of the muscle; the labourer is needed to guide the machines, and to take his place as an intelligent factor in the complex system of modern industry.

Once grant this, and the education of the labourer is seen to assume a new importance. We must have done with the nonsensical notion that careful mental training is an unnecessary or even dangerous luxury for the man who labours with his hands. We must have done too with the antiquated idea, still very commonly held, that if he is to be trained at all, manual training is what he needs. As part of his education, no doubt, the training that will co-ordinate hand and eye is supremely important, and as part of the education of the boys who will fill the higher grades of unskilled labour some train-

ing which will lead to the acquisition of the "workman's touch" is almost as essential as for those who will become skilled handicraftsmen. But those who imagine that if you wish to benefit the ordinary boy you must "teach him a trade" are clinging to the ideas of a past generation, which, having divided labour into two simple categories, always pictured the labourer as either digging a hole or making a boot, and saw no other way of raising him than by lifting him out of the drudgery of the former occupation and establishing him in the skilled craft of the latter.

The boys of our cities, with whose future we are concerned, will be no masters of ancient crafts; the world's work wants their hands and heads trained to do quickly and well whatever simple task is set before them. The type that will be needed in the future is the type of skilled and versatile *minds*; the problem of to-day is how we are to produce this type.

Will anyone who knows the town boy claim that we are now producing it? Versatile he certainly is, but his is a superficial and mercurial versatility, produced with fatal certainty by the unstable life of the street. He is master of a thousand tricks, from juggling with a button or a halfpenny to dodging a "copper" or "scoring off" his elders and betters. But intelligent he certainly is not, in the way he must be if he—and his nation—are to prosper. It would be foolish to blame the elementary schools for this; considering their difficulties—especially

the migratory habits of the families, and the necessity of large classes—the elementary school teacher produces very wonderful results; but the moral results are perhaps more wonderful than the mental. And how good the teaching may be, however successfully brighter children may be taught a great deal more than is learned by the children of the wealthier classes by the time they are fourteen, there can be no question that the average boy, still more the stupid boy, is turned out to live his life and earn his wage without the equipment he now needs. His education stops at the most critical point; he has not yet learned to apply his little knowledge to any practical use; has not yet brought it into relation to any purpose—even an easy sum in arithmetic, stated in an unaccustomed way, will seem to him insoluble—and the habits of observation, of which the foundations have been well enough laid in the school, soon fall to pieces for lack of continued stimulus and training. His employment as errand-boy or van-boy, as messenger, bottle-washer, or what not, sharpens his wits in a few directions, but leaves his mind unworked in many and untrained in all. At the age of eighteen he is usually rather more ignorant than he was at thirteen—a matter of small importance; but also much less capable of learning—a matter of the very greatest importance. Five years of idleness has had its effect; half his mind, the working half, has lost, not gained, in strength.

How is the loss to be prevented? At present there

is only one corrective influence at work—the Evening Continuation School, open some three evenings a week during part of the year for the benefit of the boys and girls who care to learn, or whose parents care to have them taught. In London the total number of these amounts to 57,800, or, roughly, one-tenth of all the boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty, who have been educated at elementary schools. Of the boys of the poorer grades it is safe to say that the proportion is much smaller. Their parents care less; they themselves have less ambition; the street and its attractions appeal to them more strongly; their power of spontaneous and prolonged effort is far smaller. And yet a nation that intends to be in the van of progress cannot afford to let them go untaught. If, as someone has said, the supply of intellectual capacity is the only permanent national capital, then the preventible loss of intelligence is a direct national loss.

There is only one conclusion—either the day-school education must be prolonged beyond the age of fourteen, or the evening school must be made compulsory. Of the two alternatives the former is for the present out of the question; public opinion is not likely to agree to raise the age-limit still further for some years to come. There remains, then, the second alternative, that evening schools should be made compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who are not being efficiently taught during the day; and this



step we venture to advocate as strongly as possible, in the interests both of the boys and girls of the present and of the citizens and workers of the future.

Of course there are difficulties and objections. The advocates of the voluntary system, many of whom have done so much to bring opportunities of education within the reach of the working-classes, will protest against compulsion. But their opposition is likely to disappear when they realise how completely the voluntary system fails to touch the boys and girls who need it most. You may open your automatic fountains of wisdom at every street-corner; the child of the street will not put his penny in the slot. For him compulsion is necessary, and very salutary; and the difficulties in the way are not insuperable. They have not proved so in Germany, where the industrial conditions are, at least, very similar. This, doubtless, is not a conclusive argument; the analogy of other countries must always be used with considerable caution; there is much truth in the saying that before you can Germanise English institutions you must first Teutonise the Saxon. But it is at least significant that the compulsory powers enjoyed by the continuation schools of the kingdom of Saxony are the direct outcome of the failure of the voluntary system; and they are doing what the voluntary system did not do.\*

\* The avowed object of these schools is not to give technical instruction, but to raise the general standard of culture. All boys leaving an elementary

There is also the objection of the sentimentalist, who will cry out against any proposal to compel the weary little workers to go to school after their hard day's toil. But the weary little workers who drag their tired limbs through the imagination of the sentimentalist do not belong to the same planet as the irresponsible little lemons who harry the life out of the manager of a rough boys' club. And it is certainly not obvious that

school are required to attend a continuation school for three years, unless their future instruction is provided for by some other approved means. Parents and guardians, masters or employers, may be punished by fine not exceeding thirty marks, or by imprisonment, if boys are absent without proper excuse, which is interpreted as attendance at another school, or illness. Business at home or trade employment of any kind is not accepted as an urgent ground. The hours of instruction are not less than two nor more than six per week. The subjects of instruction are German, arithmetic, "Realien" (that is, general knowledge of facts in history, geography, and science), mensuration, and drawing; and there is a general rule that the schools must be brought into the closest possible connection with the trades from which the pupils are drawn, and with their employers as representatives of those trades. Thus, though no technical instruction is given, the sums set and the instruction given under "Realien" will have a bearing on the occupations of the scholars, and the employers will sit on the school committee and have ample opportunities of conference with the teachers. The disciplinary power of the latter extends even outside the walls of the school, and they can forbid a scholar to frequent a public dancing-hall or other undesirable place of public amusement. Last, but not least, the continuation school sometimes forms a social centre for the scholars, and around it are grouped savings banks, musical and literary societies, and ambling clubs. No one desires to import the Saxon system ready made into England; but it at least suggests workable lines upon which we might go. A greater number of hours' instruction in the week, the additional instruction being mainly devoted to physical training, would probably be advisable in this country, where there is no compulsory military training to allow the continuation school.

any great cruelty is involved in giving three or four hours' schooling a week to the boys who habitually spend three and a half hours of every evening of the year larking about the streets. At the same time, the overfatigue of some of the boys at certain times is a real, though only an occasional, difficulty. Every club manager has, at some time, been baffled by the stupidity and sleepiness of some of his boys; and the explanation is usually to be found in the excessively long hours they have been kept at work. It is useless to talk of education for a little chap who has been hanging on to the back of a van through eleven or twelve hours of a cold winter day. His mental receptiveness has then fallen to zero, and it is waste labour to try to stimulate it into life. But what is the moral? Not that we should put compulsory evening teaching on one side because inapplicable to the overworked boy, but that we should insist upon it all the more urgently for his very sake. No surer way could possibly be found of shortening his hours of labour.\* For note that the responsibility of the boy's attendance at the school will lie equally on the employer and the parents; and the

\* All who are familiar with the early history of the Factory Acts will know how intimately the need of elementary education was connected with the shortening of the hours of child labour. The connection was at first accidental, but it soon became causal. In the same way the necessity of having the child in a teachable condition when he comes to school is the chief factor now working towards the limitation of the labour of school children out of school hours.

tendency will inevitably be to make it increasingly difficult for the one to keep the boy at work, or the other to allow him to be kept at work for a number of hours which will leave him physically and mentally exhausted.

There is, further, the objection of the ratepayer, who occasionally deserves to be listened to. But let two considerations weigh with him. First, that our shrewd competitors in America have made the discovery that, "with no noteworthy exceptions, the higher in any part of the United States the *per capita* expenditure for schools, the higher is the average for wages, and the larger, consequently, the production of wealth."\* The same discovery will eventually dawn upon us; and then the expenditure upon education will come to be looked upon less as an unnecessary waste than as a very sound investment. In the second place, the objections which are now urged, not without some reason, against the existing evening schools—that they squander a great deal of money in providing, without charge, interesting diversions rather than serious lessons for children who could quite well afford to pay for their entertainment: and that the results are not at all such as to justify the price paid—all such objections will lose their force under a compulsory system. That they have some foundation is due to the fact that the present system

\* Professor Ely, *Outlines of Economics*, book ii. chap. ii. A similar statement was made by an educational expert to the Mosely Commission to the United States.

is voluntary, and therefore it is necessary to bribe children to attend, and impossible to ensure that they will attend regularly enough to learn anything. Give compulsion, the necessity in the one case and the impossibility in the other would altogether disappear.

There remains only the objection of the children themselves; that is, perhaps, the most real of all, but is one which we may, with some confidence, disregard. If there is one thing the town child needs—and hates it is discipline, and yet more discipline, of body, mind and character. The club can catch him, but cannot discipline him; the Boys' Brigades can discipline him to a small extent, but cannot catch or keep him when he most needs it; the voluntary evening school can do neither. Nothing short of a compulsory system, in which both physical and mental training are combined, can hope to do both successfully.

But the question of discipline brings us to the third and last division of the subject. It touches at once the boy's moral nature and character, by far the most important matter with which we have to deal. And to deal with this subject at all satisfactorily we must make a fresh start, and, leaving for the moment the question of training and discipline, must form an estimate of the boy's character as it is, and of the actual, normal conditions of its development.

Is it good, bad, or indifferent? If by "it" is meant the average character of the hundred and fifty thousand

· sand boys of the lowlier working classes in London,  
· the answer must be that it is unreasonably and un-  
; intelligibly better than it has any business to be. Con-  
· trast their opportunities and temptations with those of the  
· public school boy. Till the age of eighteen or more  
· the latter is under effective tutelage. For him a real  
· home life is supplemented by an equally real restraining  
· and moulding influence at school. We do not mean the  
· influence of his masters; the one class has here little  
· advantage over the other; nor is it this that counts, for  
· boys are notoriously indifferent to the influence of the  
· best master. It is the tone of his school, the public  
· spirit, the atmosphere of healthy activity, perhaps  
· above all, the excellent arrangements for the employ-  
· ment of his time for nearly every moment of the day,  
· which tell for so much in his education. Raised above  
· the temptation of petty pilfering and some other small  
· crimes, he is shielded from the danger of idle hands,  
· and is kept in the path of some sort of virtue by the  
· hundred and one unwritten laws of his school community.  
· But turn to his brother of the poorest classes. Tumbled  
· somehow out of babyhood into childhood, he is there-  
· after left to learn what lessons he can from the three  
· unequal influences of home and street and school. And  
· how does this patchwork of an environment affect him?  
· Let us take the elements in the reverse order of their  
· importance, beginning with the home. Whatever may  
· be the case in the country, or among the families of the

skilled workers, the management of the town labourer's family is anything but patriarchal. While the child is young the mother is the ruler, and her method is a simple and invariable one—so to treat the child from moment to moment as to make him as little of a nuisance as may be. Is he troublesome or exacting? Let him find distraction in the street. Hungry? Give him a slice of bread-and-butter, to be eaten on the doorstep. Naughty? What cure so quick as a box on the ear, and tears of (doubtful) repentance on the pavement? Surely there is trouble enough with the babies, without spending time over the boys of six or eight or ten. And at the age of fourteen this summary system of moral education comes to an abrupt end. The boy is emancipated, passing from the mother's tutelage into the independence of a wage-earner, too important to be casually slapped or turned out of doors without sufficient cause. But the father's influence, negative still, now supersedes the mother's as a factor for the boy to reckon with. Their hours are approximately the same, for work-time and for leisure. But if there is comfort in the home it is for the father's enjoyment, not the boy's. The single living-room—kitchen, nursery, dining-room, scullery, sitting-room, bath-room, and probably bedroom all in one—is no place for the emancipated mannikin who has already learned to smoke as a habit, to loaf as second nature, and to hanker always after the company of his “club”—the particular street “click” of which

he is a member. But do not blame him. The home will not hold him now, has never really held him since he was an infant; it has no games, no books, no sort of magnet for a normal boy. Its one attraction, the fireside in winter, is not for him to enjoy; and the habit of the years draws him automatically outside as soon as the evening meal is over. The street calls him; the familiar yet ever-changing diversions of the communal playground beckon to him to come and forget his work and the pitiful narrowness of his tenement. There he will meet no cuffs nor blows which cannot be dodged; no angry words which cannot be disregarded; no right of place which elders claim to his exclusion; space enough for all, both boy and man; licence to do and say what each will almost as noisily as he will; no capricious interferences with his whims; amusement for all, and bustle and life for all: surely this is his "home," if word and thing mean anything good for him?

Into this chaos of home influences there is thrust day by day for some nine years of his boyhood the rule of the school, the one great element of order, regularity, and discipline. We have spoken briefly of the school in its bearing on the mental growth of the child; its moral influence deserves far more recognition and praise. Education has been called society's policeman; certainly the elementary school is its guardian of law and order in a very literal sense. The discipline may be a little wooden; there may not be as much religious and ethical



teaching as some people desire,—though few of the critics seem to know how much there really is in a board school;—and the teachers may be a little apt to think overmuch of the externals of conduct, and not enough of its spirit. Nevertheless, the school, and the school alone, stands for just those influences which the boy's life lacks. It brings him, from the age of five to fourteen, under submission to consistent authority; it makes him move, and move quickly, to the word of command; it teaches him civility and a good deal of self-control while he is under the school roof, and it introduces him daily to the novel elements of orderliness, regularity, and punctuality. It is even objected that too much is made of the two latter virtues, and that the authorities have made a fetich of attendance. But the objection is a mistaken one; it is just here that the rule of the school reacts upon the no-rule of the home. It is no exaggeration to say that this fetich of regular attendance has raised the standard of hundreds of families, compelling the mothers against their will to abandon some of their slipshod, happy-go-lucky arrangements, and to order their households in some sort of relation to regularity and method.

Now of the value of the two prominent elements in the moral training of the school—the orderliness and the discipline—it is hardly possible to form too high an estimate. They are invaluable, and nothing except the school supplies them in the least. But this does not

mean that there is enough of them, nor that the average child is turned out a model of obedience, humility, and self-control. We all know from painful experience that this is not the case. And yet his outrageous impertinence, conceit, and disrespect for us who are clearly his betters are quite compatible with a very thorough inculcation of the opposite qualities in the school. The trouble is that the master's arm does not reach far enough, nor the effect last long enough. The little world of school is very sharply separated from the bigger world outside. The best teachers in the poorest schools know perfectly well how little their influence extends beyond the school walls. It is a common experience to find a boy a Jekyll in the classroom, and a Hyde in the street; and his master knows it, but cannot alter it. More than this, with the very large number of really troublesome boys he must needs be content if he can reduce them to the semblance of orderliness in school hours, though he knows that their natures are hardly touched at all. What else can he do, with his shifting class of forty-five or fifty boys, who have to be taught the scheduled subjects in the scheduled time, and whose moral training is, after all, not his chief business? We may well be content that he succeeds as well as he does in instilling into them the first beginnings of self-control, self-respect, and obedience.

So far, then, we may say that the school is doing much to make good the defects of the home. The dis-

cipline which is usually absent from the latter is supplied by the former for at any rate five and a half hours a day.

But what of the rest of the day, and of the two whole days in each week when there is no school? During all this time the third great factor in the boy's education—the street—is dominant, asserting its power daily as a most effective counterpoise to the influence of the school.

It seems unnecessary that we should dwell upon the influence of the street. Again and again we have referred to it as the place of do-as-you-please, of licence, and of disorder. We have spoken of it as a dangerous environment from which we would gladly rescue the children if we could. And so it undoubtedly is, in so far as it supplants the influence of the home, tends to nullify that of the school, and lets the boys and girls run wild just when they most need to be tamed. But so it certainly is not, for the working people generally; and even for the child the effect is not all bad. It is, in fact, so strange a mixture of good and evil, so complex an influence in the growth of boy and girl, of youth and man, among our great city populations, that it is necessary to attempt to analyse it a little more exactly.

What part does it play, this living-place which means so much to the "lower orders," and so little to us who are not born to the freedom of the street? Understand

it, and you hold the key to many of the riddles of social morality; ignore it, and you may try in vain to explain the strength and the weakness of the people. For it is by far the strongest influence in the life of our towns—much stronger than pulpit, press, and platform, whose functions, indeed, it usurps. It is for the majority the medium in which the social conscience is formed, and through which it makes its power felt. In it the all-powerful agents of progress, example, imitation, the spread of ideas, and the discussion of good and evil, are incessantly at work. And its tendency is to raise, not to lower, the standards of action and of thought. Through that strange law by which the moral ideas of a crowd are generally better than those of the individuals composing it, the street as a whole will cry shame on an act which each person in the street, if left alone, would condone or even do without a pang of conscience. So, happily, it comes about that the boys who pick up so much of their moral teaching in the street do not as a rule turn out badly. Provided only they keep in the main current of the stream, their direction is fairly safe; it is only in the side eddies and backwaters that they go seriously astray.

Let this, then, be set down to the credit of the street, that it supplies for the children as well as for their elders some sort of a standard of action, some kind of a code of "shalt" and "shalt not," to which the great majority must and do conform. And let this too serve

to explain how it is that the majority of the boys and girls for whom the home does so little and for whom the school has so little chance of doing much, nevertheless grow up into decent and respectable citizens instead of lawless and licentious ne'er-do-weels. The chief evil of the street is, perhaps, that there is too much of it; it fills too many hours of the child's life, so that its freedom, sociability, and opportunities for play lead only to habits of aimlessly killing time by knocking about waiting for some diversion to turn up; and the stimulus of its variety is worn away to the deadness of monotony.

So far, then, we are able to go in our estimate of the chances of a passably good character for the average boy of the labouring classes. But it is only the average boy that we have touched, not the endless varieties of virtue and wickedness above and below him. The virtuous ones (and of those there are many) we may leave to take care of themselves, only remarking that, with very few exceptions, they draw their virtue from a strong and healthy home life, and nearly always, too, from a good and caring mother.

But of the exceptions at the other end of the scale—numerous also—there is more to be said, and it cannot be summed up in any generalisation about home or street. Sometimes, indeed, one lights upon the direct cause of wickedness in the badness of the parents. Here is a simple example. A boy of twelve, taken up

for stealing and placed in a Remand Home pending the magistrate's decision, returned to his mother with a glowing account of the comforts of the home. Whereupon the mother ordered him, next time he went a-stealing, to take his little brother with him; which he dutifully did, with the result that they both found their way into the Remand Home, and into the police-court dock. We all know that there are such parents as this, just as we all know that there are parents who teach their children to steal or send them out to beg. But they are certainly no commoner than the well-intentioned parents who complain pitifully that their boy of eight or nine has passed beyond their control, and has become a hardened and unregenerate sinner, irreclaimable by whipping or any known form of correction. One is inclined to laugh at these ungovernable infants, and to suspect the parents of great weakness and vacillation. But they are a real and common trouble; and for an explanation of them we are sometimes driven back to unsatisfactory references to original sin or the existence of one black sheep in every family. We would suggest, however, that a much more probable cause lies in the "growing permission of self-will in children," as someone has called it, coupled with an excess of energy and originality which is anything but bad. What other inference can one draw, when one comes across a boy of thirteen, who carefully locks his mother into her room, steals £15 worth of her stock money, spends it royally

on himself and his mates, and then—and only then—returns home to let his mother out? Or a girl of the same tender age, who, strongly disapproving of the way in which she is being brought up, and especially of her father's habit of "jawing too much," steals 15s. and several articles of furniture, takes a room on her own account, and proceeds to make a home for herself as an independent unit of society?

It is, however, possible to single out two great causes of the moral breakdown of many hundreds of boys. One is almost universally given by the parents themselves, and usually with good reason. The boy has got into bad company, they say; and though the explanation leaves the existence of the bad companions unaccounted for, it goes some way to explain the badness of the particular boy. It means that he, instead of keeping in the main current of the street life, has drifted into some backwater in which pollution spreads unchecked, and evil tendencies are not corrected by the normal healthiness of the crowd. Here the gangs of young blackguards are formed, whose thoughts are evil continually, and whose feet are, occasionally, swift to shed blood. Some of them are the "hooligans," of whom one has heard so much; the name,\* greatly abused though it is, gives a quite true index to their origin. But the popular conception of "hooliganism" is anything but true; it is especially a mistake to imagine that it is a new form

\* Said to be derived from a notorious Hooley's gang in South London.

of evil, or that it is increasing. It is at least a century and a half old; its prototype is the gang of Yahoos or Mohawks—often composed of young men of “gentle” blood—which was so common a pest in and near London in the eighteenth century. To-day the gang is the same, in all essentials; only its members are less violent and less daring, and they are not outcasts from decent society, because they have never been in it. Nature and circumstance have made them what they are—foot-pads, thieves, gamblers, greedy of gain and haters of honest work, more cowardly than their predecessors, but with the same instinct for violence. They are not all of one sex; girls will join the gang, or will occasionally form gangs of their own—though these are always temporary, and formed for the special purpose of attacking other girls. Their methods are never new; they are older than humanity itself, for they are those of the beasts of prey, with whom the hooligan has much in common. He—or rather they, for they never hunt alone—will attack an inoffensive working boy who may have a shilling in his pocket, or a stray “toff” whose watch may be worth stealing. They will even attack the police, if they are in a safe majority of ten to one; but that is rare, for there is no money to be made out of the proceeding. And usually their doings have not the faintest shadow of daring about them; they are only mean and blackguardly in unheroic ways.

Are they common, these gangs and their members?



Not commoner, certainly, than the "slums"\* in and around which they usually grow up; and like them, they are becoming yearly more rare. Can they be stamped out? When you cannot pull up a weed by the roots, it is probably better to stamp upon it than to do nothing; but ruffianism, like other forms of wickedness, will not fade away as the result of such violent remedies. There will be no real end of it, till the soil is cleaned and purified; till a neglected childhood and undisciplined boyhood are no longer left to produce their crop of moral deformities.

There is one immediate remedy for which great claims are made and about which much exaggerated talk is heard. We are told that the boys' club can cure the hooligan. It can do so, conceivably, on one condition only, that there shall be a separate club for every one or two of them, but not otherwise. And this for the very simple reason that any gang of hooligans will quickly break up any club. We hear of "blackguards'" clubs. Either this is a false description of a good thing, or a true description of a very bad one. A club of rough boys with one or two blackguards in it is possible, though dangerous; a club of many blackguards would be a free gift to the devil. It is, we fear, a general

\* Meaning by the word, if it is to have a meaning, any street or court in which squalor and dirt, *combined with a bad moral atmosphere*, make a decent standard of living almost impossible. But in this sense few parts of the working-class districts deserve to be called slums.

**w**eakness of club managers to wish to have it thought **that** they are dealing with a wicked and rougher class **of** boy or girl than is really the case. Perhaps we all **like** to imagine that we are touching the bed-rock of **human** evil in our little attempts at reform. But in this **case**, as in most, it is a foolish aim, which (happily for **us**) is seldom realised. We know two or three clubs in London, and only two or three, which "get hold of the roughest boys." If, with mistaken pride, they advertise the roughness and criminality of their members, they are making a confession of failure. They have brought in the roughs, and these remain roughs still. If they point to a reformed and well-behaved community, it is certain evidence that they have taken the sensible course of mixing in a very few hooligans among a far greater number of moderately law-abiding members. The fully fledged young cut-throat, foot-pad, or ruffian of our streets is to be dealt with in one way only—by the reformatory and the police. The gentle, uncompelling influence of a club is not for him. You must first break up his gang, and then deal separately and very firmly with each member. And this the club cannot do.

We find, then, that the association of bad companions is closely connected with the disagreeable evil of street ruffianism. With the latter also is connected a second cause; we mean the influence of dangerous employments. But the results of this are perhaps more clearly

seen in an evil which is both more widespread and more alarming. The terribly common habit of gambling may be the consequence of years spent in loafing, of deficient education, of minds empty of interests, and of leisure time which there are no healthy occupations to fill. But there can be no doubt at all that the habit is many tenfold stronger by some of the common employments in which boys engage. In some cases the reasons for this are obscure, in others very obvious. It is not always clear why the barber's shop should have and deserve so bad a name. In the past, it has been said, the barber's shop has produced Jeremy Taylor, Richard Arkwright, and Turner, the painter. To-day it produces usually the gambler and the tipster. And though this may be an exaggerated account, one often finds examples to illustrate it. But there is no difficulty in understanding how street-trading and newspaper-selling lead to gambling. We are told by those who are best able to judge, that of the young thieves and prostitutes in the city of Manchester 47 per cent. had begun as street-hawkers. For the younger boys and girls such an occupation, especially at night, turns the streets into nurseries of crime. The newspaper-sellers are not exposed to quite the same dangers; but they are nearly all gamblers. They gamble on anything and everything, from the horse races reported hour by hour in the papers they sell, to the numbers on the passing cabs. And they end by gambling with their lives. Many of them have

no homes but the common lodging-house; many have homes which are almost worse than none. Can anything be done for these? Happily, yes; it would seem that there is a preventive, if not a cure. The gambling spirit is not to be crushed out by legislation; but the conditions which make it so potent a curse to these children have been shown to be modifiable by law. In Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Glasgow, and elsewhere police control of street-trading has put an end to much of the evil. In London the attention now being paid to the employment of school children will, we trust, lead to similar measures and results. It is to be hoped, however, that the age up to which the supervision is to extend will be fixed, not at fourteen, but at sixteen. The experience of other towns has shown the importance of this extension.

On the bad effects of other occupations in which boys commonly engage we need not dwell here. The subject has been referred to in the chapter on the boy's work. But it is well to point out that the commonest of all his occupations, that of errand-boy or messenger-boy, is seldom a desirable one, quite apart from the fact that it generally leads nowhere. It lacks almost necessarily what the boy most needs, the compulsory training of the habit of disciplined effort.

We have now dealt briefly with the development of the hooligan, who is not a common product of the street, and of the gambler, who is a very common product indeed.

What is to be said of the boy who drinks? He again is fortunately rare. Smoking, swearing, gambling, and occasional but not very dangerous rowdyism, seem to complete the ordinary boy's ideal of manly vices. Excessive drinking is not considered essential, and up to the age of eighteen or nineteen an occasional visit to the public-house is all that the average boy indulges in. He is usually thirsty, possibly because in his schooldays he has been allowed to get a drink of water whenever he thinks he wants one; and the habit of thirst, combined with the habit of expectoration, will tempt him to drink other things than water when he is a man. But he has not yet formed the habit of satisfying his thirst with beer. Nor has the pernicious habit of treating yet asserted itself, though a development of the fashion is grievously common among the older boys. The boy of fourteen treats his girl to sweets; the boy of nineteen or over takes her to the public-house for a drink. Pardonable, perhaps; for how else is he to satisfy his hospitable instincts? Yet not a few of the older men will tell you that the greatest of all curses—a drunken wife and mother—is often the direct outcome of the taste for drink acquired during courtship.

Excess in drink, however, among boys and girls is only sporadic. But in some districts, where excess among men and women is the rule, the younger part of the population drinks too. Though the good sense of the working men has allowed the old drinking

customs to die out in most trades, though the "maiden garnish" of a century ago has almost disappeared, yet there exist customs almost equally bad in not a few London factories. Organised gin clubs, to which even girls of seventeen or eighteen belong, are a blot on some of the rougher factories; and bouts of debauchery at holiday times are the despair of the Church workers in some districts. Naturally this is most the case in places where drunkenness is the fashion, and where the public opinion of the street or neighbourhood shows least disapproval of it. In the Irish quarters it is especially noticeable, in spite of all the Roman Catholic priests' efforts to prevent it; and it will continue to be so until the elders are themselves temperate enough to be able to condemn it.

There remains an evil of which it is difficult to speak in general terms—the evil of immorality in the narrow sense of the word. Possibly no one can claim knowledge enough to estimate with any certainty the extent or gravity of the evil among our young town dwellers. A few generalisations may, however, be hazarded. To begin with, it is part of the street-bred child's precocity that he acquires a too early acquaintance with matters which, as a child, he ought not to know at all. His language and conversation often reveal a familiarity with vice which would be terrible were it not so superficial. But as he grows older his knowledge becomes more intimate. His curiosity and his taste for nastiness are

much too easily satisfied, both by his companions, by what he sees and hears around him, and by the pernicious literature which comes into his hands. There can be no doubt that the coarser kind of immoral literature is much rarer than it used to be, but the equally dangerous literature which thrives by the suggestion of immorality is still lamentably common.

The relation of the boys to the girls opens up questions beyond our scope, notably the question of the co-education of the sexes. In the street they mix freely enough, and the most obvious results are an incessant interchange of coarse and meaningless chaff and a great deal of disagreeable horse-play. But their behaviour is innocent as a rule; the most noticeable thing about it is its inconceivable stupidity. This also is the worst that can be said of most of the boy and girl attachments which are almost universally formed between the ages of fourteen and twenty. One is often compelled to conclude that they are formed rather in obedience to a feeling that it is the right thing to do than from any motives of inclination. Not always, however. The passion of calf-love sometimes takes an acute form, and has disastrous effects upon the behaviour and good sense of the boy. Of the effects upon the girl we are not able to judge; it is to be hoped that she is not so seriously perverted from what a normal girl should be.

And there is, of course, a far more serious side to it all. Almost as we write this we hear of a boy who

has gone straight from his club to the murder of his sweetheart. So terrible an end to the relationship is rare; but the common sequel, the girl's disgrace, is no less tragic. It is remedied often by a hasty marriage, insisted upon by the parents of the girl, supported usually by the clergy. But the remedy brings its own crop of evils; what can one hope for from the union of a boy and girl both equally unfitted for the duties of parentage?

But we do not wish to dwell upon so painful a subject. It is better not to do so, lest we leave an impression that immorality of this kind is universal among the boys and girls of the labouring classes. We do not believe that it is anything of the sort, nor do we believe that the town youth is any worse than his brother and sister of the country. Coarseness and impurity are not the distinguishing mark of any one class or any one place. It is easy to speak of East and South London as abysses wherein whole populations are sunk in the mire of sordid squalor and repulsive sin. It is as easy to say in one's haste that all the people are immoral as to assert that they are liars, and just as untrue. Granting the greater coarseness of words, the more flagrant faults of habit and behaviour, we question whether a comparison of sins and self-indulgence would work out at all to the disadvantage of the town labouring class as a whole. It must be remembered that one common-place factor, the glaring publicity of the street, is all on the side of the town youth's virtue. We pity him



because he is always one of the crowd, and finds it hard to get away from it, and to be alone. But if he has to make his solitude he has also to make his opportunities for evil; they do not offer themselves. The street has its safeguards as well as its dangers, and this is not the least of them.

We do not intend to carry further our account of the boy's morals. Many matters of importance remain; his honesty or truthfulness, for instance, or the reverse. But on these points all that can be said in general terms has been said in the chapter on the criminal boy. It is dangerous to stretch the generalisation beyond the reach of statistics. Moreover, to ask whether the street boys are truthful or untruthful, honest or dishonest, is hardly more sensible than to ask whether they are dark-haired or fair. Some of them will steal anything, lie about everything, and be abashed by nothing in the way of discovery or punishment. We have known a night school in which the teachers had to spend much more of their time in watching the boys than in teaching. We have known boys equally poor who could safely be left alone night after night within reach of valuables any of which they might have "pinched" without fear of detection. Taken altogether, they have doubtless a lower standard of honesty and honour than the public school boy, just as they have a lower conception of fair play; and for much the same reason in both cases. They have grown up in a different atmosphere.

We may pass, then, at once to our final question: How are we to help the labouring boy to rise to a healthier moral life? I suppose everyone will have an answer ready; and every answer worth giving will refer us to one influence of which we have made no mention at all—the influence of religion. And even now we only mention it lest it should be thought that we have negligently passed it by. Say rather that we have assumed it as the beginning and end of every effort; but pass it by we must, through sheer incompetence to give advice. Every friend of the boys who is worth his salt will know that he has no sadder fact to face than this, that the boy's life lacks the first condition of a good life. This is not in the least a question of creed or dogma or church-going. We do not expect much of the boy. The normal young animal—and the healthy boy is not much more than this—cares only for the here and now; the unseen and eternal hardly come within the range of his vision. But we do expect something. We look for just the beginnings of reverence, for some dim recognition of a higher power than force and a higher law than that of men. And we find either a total blank, or, even worse, a readiness to scoff at everything sacred. Yet it would be a mistake to think that the boy has been neglected. He has almost certainly spent some years in a Sunday-school; most parents send their children, if only for the sake of convenience. He has had regular instruction, too, at the day school,

whether of Church or State. But, quite naturally, the effect is slight and transient. It is such a feeble influence to pit against the all-pervading indifference of father, brothers, mates, of all the older and stronger boys and men who are the examples which he is busy imitating every day and all day.

We must turn therefore to what may be called the secondary agencies for the improvement of the boy. These really resolve themselves into one—the universally accepted agency of the boys' club or brigade. And this has been so fully dealt with by Mr. Braithwaite, in his chapter on clubs, that we have little to add here. Some stray references, however, in other parts of the book may have led the reader to conclude that the other writers do not share his high estimate of the value of the club method. As this inference is negated by the practice of most of us, it will be well to make clear our opinion on the whole subject.

We do not believe in the indiscriminate opening of clubs in every corner of every district, even if the necessary money and men were forthcoming, which they are not. Some districts can do without them altogether; others want three or four times as many as they are ever likely to get. It is unfortunate that encouragement has been given to the notion that the club is a kind of universal panacea which no parish should be without. It is not wanted for many thousands of working boys. Mr. Bray has described the large class of boys who are

lucky enough to have a good home and parents who look after them well. For these the club is simply a luxury, and it is entering into competition with a far better influence than its own. Such boys have plenty of interests, plenty of companions, and plenty of looking after. They do not want any impetuous philanthropy to take them in hand. All that they need outside the home in the way of exercise, education, and amusement they can perfectly well obtain at the evening school. At the other end of the scale is the smaller class of untamed roughs and rowdies; and for these the club is equally useless, though for very different reasons. They need so much more than it can possibly give; and if they find it exciting enough to be worth their patronage at all, they will turn it into a bear-garden, to be used just as long as it suits their fancy and no longer. We have already referred to the uselessness of the club influence in taming the street savage, and we need not dwell on the subject further.

Between these two extremes falls the very large class of ordinary labouring boys whose characteristics we have tried to describe. For these the club is, or may be, of the utmost value; might indeed be a hundred times more valuable than it is, if only people cared to make it so. The ways in which it should be worked, the forms in which its influence should be applied, have already been told. Its limitations also; for its authority is weak, and of compelling power it has none. But in

good hands and for the boys for whom it is suited there is perhaps no more powerful agency for good.

To what extent are we now making use of the club influence? We have estimated the number of working boys in London between the ages of fourteen and twenty at a quarter of a million; this is an outside estimate, and must be taken for Greater London, not the administrative county only. Of this number we may probably cut out nearly one-half as belonging to the classes for which clubs are not wanted. We have left some 120,000 boys in whose lives a good club or brigade would make a difference, which cannot be estimated in statistics. Now by inquiries in all parts of London the Twentieth Century League was able to discover that some 25,000 boys were provided for in some sort of club or similar institution. We shall not be accused of hypercriticism if we cut out at least half of these as being members of clubs which ought not to be included in our category at all. Even so we are quite certain that we shall be above the mark, and that 10,000 would be a very much truer estimate of the number of labouring boys who come under the influence of a really effective club. It is a ridiculously small proportion; surely it may be increased indefinitely if only public interest can be aroused? Are there not many hundreds of keen and capable men—old public school boys, for instance, and University men—whose evenings are not yet wholly absorbed by “social duties,” who

will throw themselves into the work when they realise how much they can do? We wish it were so; the work is so well worth doing. But we are not in the least sanguine. There are few signs of any such readiness on the part of the comfortable classes of the community to give up a little of their leisure time regularly week by week for the benefit of the poorer boys and girls. And,—a small matter, no doubt, but not really an unimportant one,—it is not quite safe to assume that all the available members of the comfortable classes are entirely competent to do the work well. When we remember that one man is wanted for every twenty boys, and at least £2 annually for every one boy, our wildest hopes will not allow us to look forward to more than a possible doubling of the number of effective clubs within the next twenty or thirty years. We may live to see 20,000 boys really well provided for out of 120,000.

It seems clear, then, that for the moral improvement of the average boy, as well as for his mental improvement, the “voluntary system” will not suffice. Some method must be devised by which, *volens volens*, he may be influenced during part of his leisure time. And so, by another path, we are brought round to the conclusion which we reached when we were considering the needs of the boy’s mind. If it is true, as we have suggested, that the paramount need is discipline, for his character even more than for his mind, we find an additional and very strong argument for the establish-

ment of compulsory evening classes which we advocated a few pages back. The mind of the boy, we saw, must be trained to be intelligent, or the man will fail in his work. The character of the boy must be trained in habits of obedience to rule and authority, or the man will fail in self-control. And for the street boy proper we have little hope that either result can be effectively secured except by compulsory attendance at an evening school (in the true sense of the word), in which the training of his body and character by the discipline of drill and by the performance of necessary tasks shall be combined with the training of his mind by the intelligent direction and cultivation of his reasoning powers.

But it is time to bring this concluding chapter to an end. We have only one more thing to add. It may be objected that we have paid too little attention to the material environment, and have given too little weight to all the proposals for improving the condition of the "masses" by housing, feeding, physicking, clothing, cleaning, or legislating, of which so much is usually expected. We have no wish to disregard these; they may be rather mechanical, but mechanical improvements always have their effect, whether they are on a big scale or a small. The big things count for much. When the County Council breaks up a "slum," or the police break up a gang of hooligans, something is done. Evil is weakened by being scattered. The small things count, too. Every lamp placed by a borough council

in an unlit alley is a direct aid to morality. Evil is lessened by being exposed to light. But changes in the immaterial environment, in the habits, thoughts, standards, aims, of the people, far transcend in importance any alteration of the external setting of the people's life. On these, therefore, we have dwelt, and to these we return. Let us by all means do all that can be done to "improve the condition" of the boy. Let playing fields and gymnasiums be provided, with all the other equipment for his games and exercises. The health of his body demands it. Let the discipline of class and school be brought to him, and him to them, compulsorily if need be. The strength of his mind requires it. And let the public-house be closed to him, and the club and brigade, the mission, and the band of hope be opened to take its place; for his character, too, needs the help of circumstance. But is that all? Assume even the home life, which no mechanical altering of house or street, no philanthropic ingenuity or reforming effort can ever give; assume, too, the discipline of wholesome occupation and the stimulus of healthy interests;—are we even so within sight of a boyhood with which we can be content? Clearly not yet; for we have still no guarantee that the boys we may have laboured to protect and train will become men to whom it will be natural to live cleanly and do justly, to work their hardest and to play their fairest. Education will not alone cure them of gambling and drinking; healthy exercises will not alone



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turn them from self-indulgence, nor healthy recreation deprive them of the taste for excitements which are vulgar and debasing. So long as the love of things is part of the atmosphere which surrounds life, so long will they seek them and love them.

A very simple matter—as simple as the fundamental of all social reform. We alter others—by altering ourselves. The rich, who claim to be also educated, do what they will with the poor and the ignorant; their claim is valid. They can do it not by their numbers nor by any wise device of legislative reform, but always by their own example, and in no other way whatever. A religious “upper class” would solve the problem of irreligion without a single mission; a temperate “upper class” would make temperance a work of supererogation; a self-controlled “upper class,” which should realise that simplicity is in good taste than luxury, would have no cause to grieve at the self-indulgence and foolish extravagances of the poor. We are always asking what can be done to make the people better and happier, and philanthropists hasten to tell us a thousand ways, some harmless, some not. But the door of social betterment stands open the while; there is no key to be searched for and found, for none is needed. The children of the poor follow where they are led; their “betters” are the leaders, and the example of their life determines the path.

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